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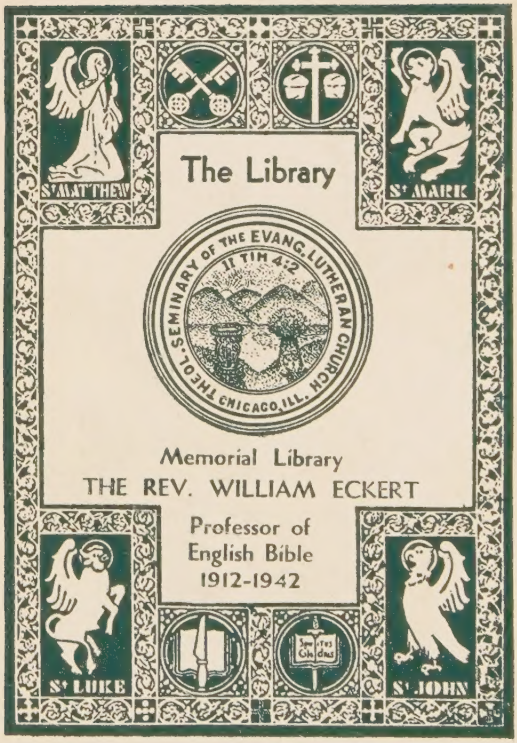
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JESUS THE CHRIST:
HISTORICAL OR MYTHICAL?

JESUS THE CHRIST:

HISTORICAL OR MYTHICAL?

A REPLY TO PROFESSOR DREWS'
DIE CHRISTUSMYTHE

BY

THOMAS JAMES THORBURN
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Ἰησοῦν τὸν Ναζωραῖον, ἄνδρα ἀποδεδειγμένον
ἀπὸ τοῦ Θεοῦ, εἰς ὑμᾶς δυνάμεσι καὶ τέρασι
καὶ σημείοις . . . διὰ χειρὸς ἀνόμων
προσπήξαντες ἀνείλατε.

Act. Apost. ii. 22, 23.

Νενίκηκας, Γαλιλαῖε!

JULIANUS, *Imperator.*
(THEOD. *Eccl. Hist.* iii. 21.)

So he proposed inquiring first
Into the various sources, whence
This Myth of Christ is derivable;
Demanding from the evidence
(Since plainly no such life was liveable)
How these phenomena should class?
Whether 'twere best opine Christ was,
Or never was at all, or whether
He was and was not—both together—
It matters little for the name
So the *Idea* be left the same.

ROBERT BROWNING, *Christmas Eve*, xv.

HERO-WORSHIP, heartfelt prostrate admiration, submission burning, boundless, for a noblest god-like Form of Man,—is not that the germ of Christianity itself? The greatest of all Heroes is One — whom we do not name here.

THOMAS CARLYLE, *The Hero as Divinity.*

PREFACE.

It would seem to have been reserved for the wisdom of the nineteenth century to initiate serious doubts regarding, and even entire disbelief in, the historical character of Jesus Christ.

This fact, however,—startling as it may seem,—need not occasion any surprise. An age which, for the most part, delighted to belittle the great Personalities of the Past, which could tolerate such a definition of *genius* as 'the capacity for taking infinite pains,' and which, in many cases at least, coolly denied the existence of everything that could not be forced into a narrow and materialistic world-formula — alike inexplicable and purposeless in its nature and results—might well be conceived as capable of the rejection of even the greatest, the most human and the most Divine Figure, that has ever been presented to mankind for their homage, and as the supreme Model upon which they must fashion their own lives.

In this work the present writer has attempted to trace in outline the development of this historical heresy from its rise in the mind of the *quondam* Hegelian theologian Strauss,[1] through the hasty and sweeping negations of Bruno Bauer, the reckless statements of Mr. J. M. Robertson, and the critical theories of Professor W. B. Smith and others, down to its most recent issues and culmination in the extreme and impracticable idealism of Professor Drews, who seems fondly to imagine that the great spiritual Temple of Christianity, which has been built up at the cost of so much travail and sorrow, and which has conferred so many benefits, material as well as spiritual, upon mankind, can be preserved intact for the use of generations yet unborn, when the *historical* Jesus, 'the chief corner-stone' of the building, has been taken away. What the inevitable result to the world, in such a case, would be, it requires no inspired prophet to foretell!

In the historical section of the work, the author has endeavoured to show, in the first place, that the *Messiah* expected by every Jew, both at the time of Christ and previously, was a triumphant Deliverer and Ruler, and not a suffering and dying God. Even the Prophets and Psalmists

[1] Although Strauss believed in a (wholly unknown) historical Jesus, he practically initiated and developed the *Christ Myth*, strictly so called.

of Exilic and post-Exilic times shared in this outlook, and (contrary to what is commonly supposed) looked forward to no such Redeemer as the One who, 'in the fulness of time,' came to work out both the temporal and eternal destinies of the human race.

In the next place, special stress is here laid upon the *historic* character and value of the underlying basis of our present Synoptic Gospels —the Primitive Gospel, as we may term it—which, though actually lost as a separate and independent document, can still be traced in the three inter-related narratives that largely grew up out of it. The writer has also attempted to show that the *Logia*, or Sayings of Jesus, which are now extant in our Gospels, contain a spiritual and ethical doctrine immensely superior to that of any of the 'sources' from which many present-day writers would derive them, and, therefore, that in themselves they plainly indicate an absolutely original and spiritual Personality as their Author.

The teaching of St. Paul is also set forth as a system harmonizing *in spirit* with that of Jesus, as recorded in the Synoptic Gospels; and the *indirect* and incidental references to an 'historical Jesus' which are met with in his Epistles, and in the extant record of his travels, are regarded as showing clearly that it was no 'spectral' Jesus, or 'mythical' Christ, which was present in his mind when, amid toil, and weariness, and suffer-

ing, he preached 'Jesus Christ crucified and risen from the dead.'

Further, an attempt has been made to estimate more accurately the true nature and value of the direct secular evidence for an historical Jesus, as it is found in the testimony of Josephus, and in that of the Roman writers, and also in the early Jewish impressions, as these are recorded in Talmud and Midrash, and, later, in the highly legendary Toledoth Jeschu. The *indirect* value of much of this Jewish literature has hitherto been greatly underestimated.

In the part dealing with the Mythical *data*, the entire lack of valid historical and other evidence for the existence of pre-Christian and secret Jewish cults worshipping a Redeemer, or Healer-God, named 'Jesus,' is insisted upon; and the numerous ethical and spiritual, as well as historical, differences between the Jesus of the Evangelists and St. Paul, and the (so-called) dying and rising 'saviours' of the various contemporary nature-cults is dealt with so far as space-limits would allow.

Finally, the current fashion in some theological circles, of mythologizing the Gospels generally, is discussed in three separate chapters, in which—taking a selected number of the chief events recorded by the Synoptists — by showing the forced 'parallels,' the more than questionable etymologies, and the frequently inaccurate and

misleading quotations and inferences drawn from the works of ancient and even modern writers, the methods too freely adopted by many mythicizers are set forth in some detail.

A short chapter bearing upon the adoption and use of symbols in the primitive Church has also been added, which, it is hoped, will show that while the early Christians undoubtedly borrowed perhaps all the symbols which were used by them, they gave to these secret signs, in many respects, an entirely new turn, and invested them with a meaning hitherto wholly unknown to the religious thought of the ancient world.

I have to thank my friend Mr. J. Arthur Hill for kindly and efficient help in reading the proof-sheets.

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BIBLIOGRAPHY.

The following list of the chief modern books and pamphlets, dealing with the question of the 'Christ Myth,' will be of use to the reader who wishes to pursue the subject further.[1]

I. NEGATIVE WORKS.

SEYDEL, R., *Das Evangelium von Jesu in seinen Verhältnissen zu Buddha-Saga und Buddhalehre* (1882); *Die Buddha-legende und das Leben Jesu nach den Evangelien* (1884; 2nd ed. 1909).

[In these works Seydel attempts to prove that the sources of our present accounts of the Buddha are older than the Christian Gospels, and that the latter are largely derived from them. (Answered effectively by Bousset in the *Theologische Rundschau*, February 1889.)]

ROBERTSON, J. M., ***Christianity and Mythology* (1900); *A Short History of Christianity* (1902). ***Pagan Christs: Studies in Comparative Hierology* (1903; 2nd ed. 1912).

[Robertson traces the picture of Christ, as portrayed in the Gospels, to a syncretism of mythological elements derived primarily from Judaism, combined with various Pagan beliefs, including the *Kṛishna* myth and the *Buddha* story. He believes that the Jesus of the Gospels was practically identical with an old Ephraimite sun-god named 'Joshua.']

[1] ** indicate the more important works, especially for the English reader.

KALTHOFF, A., *Das Christusproblem: Grundlinien zu Sozialtheologie* (1903); *Die Entstehung des Christentums, Neue Beiträge zum Christusproblem* (1904). *Was wissen wir von Jesus? Eine Abrechnung mit Prof. Dr. Bousset* (1904).

[Kalthoff asserts that the original Christianity, so far from being in any sense an *individualistic* religion, was merely a collective movement of the masses. It originated, he maintains, in Rome, and is a syncretism of Jewish Messianism, Stoic philosophy, and the ideas of various proletarian socialistic societies, which existed at that period in the Roman Empire.

The notion of a *personal* founder he rejects as wholly unhistorical; he is only a personification of the ideals and experiences of the primitive Christian community, the suffering, dying and rising Christ merely *typifying* the community's own life of suffering, martyrdom and revival.]

Amongst the writers of the (Socialistic) school of Kalthoff the chief, perhaps, are:—

KAUTSKY, K., *Der Ursprung des Christentums* (1908); 'Jesus der Rebell' in *Die neue Zeit.* xxviii. 13–17, 44–52 (1910).

[Kautsky admits an 'historic Jesus,' but makes Him a social and political revolutionist—a kind of 'Marxist.']

MAURENBRECHER, M., *Von Nazareth nach Golgotha, eine Untersuchung über die weltgeschichtlichen Zusammenhänge des Urchristentums* (1909); *Berliner Religionsgespräch* (1910).

[Maurenbrecher makes Christianity a derivative of the 'Son of Man myth,' and supposes that the hopes of the proletariat of the period were expressed in concrete form in the person of Jesus, after His death.]

SMITH, W. B., ***Der Vorchristliche Jesus* (1906); Eng. tr. *The Pre-Christian Jesus* (1906).

[Smith derives the 'Christ-myth' from certain alleged 'Jesus-cults,' dating from pre-Christian times. Starting from the statement found in

Acts xviii. 25, that Apollos preached 'the things of Jesus' (τὰ περὶ τοῦ Ἰησοῦ), while he was only acquainted with 'the baptism of John,' Smith supposes that these 'things' refer to some doctrines peculiar to an old *cult-god* of that name.

He also urges that the word 'Nazareth' was not originally the name of a town, or village (as in the N.T.), but, as Nazaraios, meant 'Guardian,' or 'Saviour'—having the same meaning, in fact, as the word 'Jesus' itself. 'Christ,' also, in his view, means the Deity, Χριστός being equated with Χρηστός (cp. Ps. xxxiv. 8).]

JENSEN, P., *Das Gilgamesch-epos in der Weltliteratur* (1906); *Moses, Jesus, Paulus: drei varianten des babylonischen gottmenschen Gilgamesch* (1909); *Hat der Jesus der Evangelien wirklich gelebt?* (1910).

[Jensen (whose work is not utilized by Drews) thinks that Jesus was neither a personified *ideal* (Drews), nor an anthropomorphized *cult-god* (Smith), but a reproduction of one (or possibly more) of the heroes of the Babylonian Gilgamesh epic.

The whole of his argument rests upon the supposed parallels to be found when that epic is compared with the Gospels, many agreements in the succession of events being alleged. Although the author does not absolutely deny the existence of Jesus, he makes both the Gospels and the Pauline Letters mere imitations of the Babylonian myth. (Jensen, however, completely ignores the numerous events which are *not* parallel, and also the fact that, in the main, the two stories are utterly unlike.) It is generally agreed that the 'correspondences' are very strained, and that the whole work is fantastic and unsatisfactory.]

DREWS, A., ***Die Christusmythe* (4th ed. 1911); Eng. tr., *The Christ Myth* (3rd ed. 1910); *Berliner Religionsgespräch: 'Hat Jesus gelebt?'* (Berlin and Leipzig, 1910).

[In the *Die Christusmythe*, Drews builds largely upon the work of both Robertson and Smith. From the former he takes the general mythical theory of the Gospel narratives, and in particular the identification of Jesus with an old Israelite cult-god,—equating Joshua-Jason-Jesus as all representing the sun.

From Smith he adopts the theory of pre-Christian cults of 'Jesus,' and the further contention that the members of these cults were denominated (like the Christians subsequently) 'Nazorœans.' Christianity, he maintains,

is a syncretism mainly of these elements, together with Jewish Messianism and the pagan idea of a 'redeemer-god' (*e.g.* Adonis), who 'dies' and 'rises,' a synthesis effected in the mind of St. Paul, who 'knew no historical Jesus.'

At first St. Paul, as a legalist, opposed the Gospel, because the Law pronounced as cursed every one who had been 'hanged upon a tree.' But suddenly he became 'enlightened,' and then he synthesized in his mind the expected and 'orthodox Jewish Messiah' with the 'self-sacrificing god' of the Ethnic nature-cults, which were closely akin to the pre-Christian Jesus-cults. This, says Drews, was "the moment of Christianity's birth as a religion of Paul."]

Stendel, F., *Wir Gelehrten vom Fach! Eine Streitschrift gegen Professor Dr. von Soden's* 'Hat Jesus gelebt?' (1910).

Lublinski, S., *Die Entstehung des Christentums aus der Antiken Kultur* (1910); *Falsche Beweise für die Existenz des Menschen Jesus* (1910).

Schultz, W., *Documente der Gnosis. Mit einer Ausführlichen Einleitung* (1910).

II. AFFIRMATIVE WORKS

Bornemann, *Jesus als Problem* (1909).

Windisch, 'Der geschichtliche Jesus' in the *Theologische Rundschau*, xii. (1910).

Wernle, P., 'Wider moderne Skepsis für den Glauben an Jesus,' in *Die Christliche Welt* (17th February 1910).

Holtzmann, H., 'Paulus als Zeuge wider die Christusmythe von Arthur Drews' (*idem*).

von Soden, H., ***Hat Jesus Gelebt?* (1910); Eng. tr., *Has Jesus Lived?* (1911).

Beth, *Hat Jesus Gelebt?* (1910).

Jülicher, A., ***Hat Jesus Gelebt?* (1910).

Weinel, H., *Ist das 'liberale' Jesusbild Widerlegt?* (1910).

Weiss, J., ***Jesus von Nazareth: Mythus oder Geschichte?* (1910).

Dunkmann, K., ***Der historische Jesus, der mythol. Christus, und Jesus der Christus* (1910).

Rossington, H. J., *Did Jesus really Live?* (1911).

Case, S. J., ***The Historicity of Jesus* (1912).

Gogoul: Jesus · Nazarene, Myth or Hist. 1926

INTRODUCTION.

THE OLD AND THE NEW MYTHICISM.

BEFORE proceeding to marshal and discuss the evidence which is now available for establishing the actual existence of Jesus Christ, the greatest Figure in all history, whether religious or secular, it will, perhaps, be advisable to obtain a clear, even though it be a brief, view, not only of the new mythical theory of Professor Drews, but also, as far as may be in the space at our disposal, to arrive at an understanding of its relation to the older mythical theory of the origin of Christianity, which was put forward with equal confidence some three generations ago.

David Friedrich Strauss (1808-74), the originator of this older hypothesis, published his once famous *Das Leben Jesu* ('The Life of Jesus') in 1835–36.[1] In this work the theological premises of Strauss were largely shaped by con-

[1] Revised and republished (tr. by 'George Eliot') in a popular form as *The Life of Jesus Critically Examined* (1846). Finally, it was again rewritten and published (1865) as *A New Life of Jesus for the German People.*

tact with the Hegelian system of Philosophy.[1] He took from this system an emphatic conception of *Ideas* as, indeed, the great and only true factors in history, the real determining forces at the back of the chain of events, which are ever unfolding, according to a law of inner necessity, and finding, even in the greatest personalities who have lived, not so much masters as instruments of their evolution.

The speculation of the age, observed Strauss, referring to the great Hegelian system, which was then at the very apex of its popularity, represents that God has the character of Self-Conscious Spirit through a process of Self-Objectification in the world and return unto Himself. He is not a Person alongside of, or over, other persons. The Personality of God must be thought of, not as a single Personality, but as the *All*-Personality, and, as such, realised through a world-process. This does not, however, mean that God attains to completeness *in time*. "He is," to quote Strauss directly (*Glaubenslehre*, 1840–41, §§ 34, 38), "ever finished and perfect; but He is this only because, and in so far as, He

[1] This system found its extreme expression in the saying of Michelet, one of the 'Left Wing' Hegelians, to which party Strauss himself belonged at the time when he wrote the first edition: "The Absolute arrives at consciousness first in man. Man is the epiphany of the Eternal Personality of the Spirit." In later life Strauss sank gradually into a materialistic Monism of a pessimistic type.

has created from eternity, and continues to create; His eternal ingoing into Himself is conditioned upon His eternal outgoing from Himself."[1]

It might—apart from all controversial questions—be added here, that there is probably much insight displayed, and some truth expressed, in this definition of the existence of the Divine Being; provided always that it can be stripped of its implicated Pantheism, and the true Personality of the Deity can be retained in a form which transcends all our present conceptions of individual existence.

But this is exactly what Strauss failed to see, though the necessity of it—if we would escape the inevitable and bottomless abyss of a vague Pantheism (or even the more modern Panpsychism), whether idealistic or materialistic—was clearly foreseen by Hegel himself, and guarded against more or less effectually by the other Hegelian schools.[2] The latter fact, however, was realized to some extent by Strauss, for we find him expressing his conviction that Hegel, had he been then alive, would not have altogether approved of his metaphysical position in the *Leben Jesu*. For it was, without doubt, quite contrary to the view of that profound thinker to

[1] Cp. the affinities of this conception of God, and His activity, with the Vedantic teaching about the nature of the Universe, which is an 'expiration' (to be followed by an 'inspiration') of the 'Breath of Brahm'—the only Reality.

[2] *i.e.* the 'Right Wing' ('orthodox') and 'Centre' Hegelians.

hold that God has not a Personal Existence, as well as an Immanence in the world of Nature. (*Logic*, §§ 63, 151).

The fact is, that Hegel undoubtedly held that in concrete Personality alone lay the goal of the (otherwise abstract) Idea. It was only through personality that the Idea was able fully to express itself both in Nature and in History. Hence God Himself *must* have a personal existence—though personal in a sense very far removed above all our present conceptions of personality.

Furthermore, it is clear that Strauss was fully conscious that his *Christological* views would not have been consonant with those of Hegel. With the latter thinker Jesus Christ, in a special sense, exemplified the union of the divine and the human, and, therefore, formed an eternal reconciliation of the two great antinomies, the Human and the Divine, objectified and embodied in an historic person, who in his complete unity reflected, whilst combining, each component in a manner that was both perfect and unique—a necessary outcome, in short, of the manifestation and self-realization of God.[1]

[1] It is frequently asserted that Hegel left the Christological problem undecided, and extracts from his works can be quoted which may bear this interpretation. The following passages, however, seem to us decisive against this view. "Christ . . . is not merely a man who experienced a particular fate . . . He is also the Son of God" (*Philos. of Relig.*, tr. Spiers and Saunderson, i. 226). "Christ has been called the God-Man . . . the unity of the divine and human natures has here been brought into human conscious-

This view, however, Strauss seems unable to accept (see *Leben Jesu*, § 151, *Glaubenslehre*, § 66); hence we may conclude that he, and all those who departed from this view of Jesus Christ, were no true Hegelians.

But it is not altogether directly with these high and abstract philosophemes that we are here concerned, but rather with Strauss's view that our knowledge of Jesus Christ, as a real historic character, is, in a sense, purely mythical. And here let us see, in the first instance, what Strauss means by 'myth' and 'mythical.'

Myth, says Strauss, is not so much the product of conscious invention, as the result of a pronounced inclination to the pictorial. This, he contends, is the *form* to which the human mind naturally resorts at the stage where it inevitably finds the difficulty of resting in the conceptual world. In other words, mythicizing is the childlike faculty of putting things, which the juvenile mind is incapable of stating in a scientific fashion, in a concrete and pictorial form.

ness, and has become a certainty for it" (*ibid.* iii. 76). "Christ's death primarily means that Christ was the God-Man" (*ibid.* iii. 89). "Christ calls Himself the Son of God and the Son of Man; these titles are to be taken in their strict meaning" (*ibid.* iii. 85); cp. also his statements in the *Philos. of Hist.* (tr. Sibree), pp. 336, 337, 340. In short, he both speaks of the story of Christ as true history with a divine content, and affirms that He, as the Divine Son—the Other of the Father—possesses "the entire fulness of the divine nature in Himself." But, of course, it is not implied here that Hegel always uses Christian phrases in exactly the 'orthodox' sense.

In its *pure* form, he goes on to say, the Gospel myth contains the whole substance of the narrative; in its *modified* form it is attached to a substratum of real history. The myth-making faculty which was operative in the Gospel narratives, was set to work first of all by Messianic expectation. As the Messiah was to crown the prophetical succession in which Moses stood, it was deemed necessary that He also should do mighty works. As the countenance of the great Lawgiver was glorified by the Divine Presence, so it was thought fitting that the Messiah should appear in a scene of Transfiguration. Thus, *anticipation* put its own fashion upon Christ, and wrought to make Him seem to have been, and to have actually done, what was called for as the ideal of His office.

The above definition, and statement as to the nature of the Gospels, contains, it must be allowed, a germ of truth. The Evangelists who wrote—or rather compiled—the Gospel narratives, did not always record the life of Jesus exactly as we moderns sometimes suppose. Hence the difficulty which exists to-day in reducing these records to the terms demanded by modern scientific history. In like manner primitive thinkers and writers explained the creation of the world under pictorial images, while the more mature mind of to-day expresses it—perhaps still inadequately—by the help of an evolutionary formula.

It will accordingly have been observed that Strauss nowhere declares Jesus Christ to be a mythical person, in the sense of an entirely non-existent human being. He is mythical only in the sense that all our accounts of Him are childish narratives, by means of which His simple-minded and ignorant followers endeavoured to portray the real man to those who came after them. Thus, he says: "We rate as Gospel myths any narrative, related directly or indirectly to Jesus, which is not, and in so far as it is not, to be accounted an expression of fact, but *a precipitate of an idea* of his earliest disciples" (*Leben Jesu*, § 15). Consequently, according to Strauss, all our existing narratives about Jesus are inacceptable in so far as they testify not to His *existence* merely, but also to His actions and sayings; because the records of these are merely precipitates of the ideas existent in the minds of His disciples *about* Him.[1] They are—he would assert—mere child-stories, expressing some truths probably, but setting them forth in such a fashion that they have little or no more value for us than the nursery-story has, because we will probably never be able to resolve the mythical forms in which the facts are enshrined into historic verities relating to the actual and real Jesus.

So far the position of Strauss is, we hope, clear: let us now proceed to inquire further, and

[1] Cp. here Hegel, *Philos. of Relig.* i. 146, § *b*.

more precisely, *why* Strauss holds that our Gospel narratives have a wholly mythical form, and, therefore, are not historical in the strict modern sense of the term. And we very soon find what are his real grounds for this view. Strauss objects *in toto* to the Gospel narratives being classed as history, because (1) they imply a Revelation, and (2) relate 'Miracles' as having been performed by Jesus. We will, therefore, examine his views upon these two points, which indirectly raise the important question of the 'Supernatural.'

"A revelation," says Strauss (*Glaubenslehre*, § 19), "that is an immediate working of the highest being upon the human spirit, leaves to the latter *nothing but absolute passivity*;[1] for the highest being is absolutely active, while the correlate of absolute activity is absolute passivity. It follows at once then, from this side, that the conception of revelation is an impossible one."

It is easy to see how Strauss, by such an overstraining of Hegelian logic, placed himself directly in a position which necessitated a total rejection of revelation in any form. But his premises are wholly inaccurate and misleading, and his conclusion, accordingly, though logically drawn, is untrue. The Divine Spirit, and the human spirit, do not stand over against each as wholly separate and antagonistic entities, though for the purposes

[1] Italics ours.

of the dialectic they may be regarded as opposed 'moments' in the march of Thought.[1]

The human spirit, in its origin and essence, is, as it has frequently been recognised to be, an '*image*'—however much distorted by sin—of the divine, and, as such, partakes in some degree of its nature, and, therefore, has affinities with it. Consequently, the latter does not work "upon" the former (as Strauss supposes) in an external and carpenter-like fashion; but it works internally through the plastic medium of the human consciousness, which, in its turn, mirrors (though ever imperfectly) the divine; and the whole process is, in effect, a self-reciprocal one.[2] In other words, the Divine Spirit yearns for (to use a common, but imperfect, expression), and reaches out to, the human spirit, and the human spirit, in its turn, and by virtue of its true affinity with it, ever seeks the divine. And it is through this mutual interaction, of what in its real essence is related, that the human spirit can grasp—however imperfectly—the divine, and the Divine Spirit can effectually help the human. Strauss might well reject the possibility of a revelation, if there were an alien and Divine Spirit, and an absolute activity

[1] Thought=Being, in the Hegelian *schema*.

[2] The analogy, which here suggested itself, is that of the *sun* and its *image* upon the bosom of the lake. But, like all analogies, it is imperfect. Cp. how the cruder concept of Gen. i. 26, 27, and similar passages, is subsumed under the higher concept expressed in 2 Cor. iii. 18, etc.

on the one hand, and an alien and unresponsive human spirit, with an absolute passivity on the other. But the curious part of the matter is, that he seems never to have realized that these postulates were a mere *chimæra* of his imagination—a fact which the history of man's efforts to reach out *to*, and realize himself *in*, God might have taught him, had he deigned to observe the commonest and most fundamental phenomena of religion.

Again, with regard to miracles, Strauss is equally conscious of a departure from the actual teaching of Hegel. The latter philosopher never denied the possibility of miracles, and their probability even was an accepted fact, at least with the Hegelians of the 'Right Wing.' But Strauss, despite Hegel's practical admission of the possibility (in a certain sense) of the miraculous, says dogmatically: "The Absolute Causality never breaks in upon the chain of conditioned causes in single acts, seeing that it rather manifests itself only in the production of finite causes, and of their interworking" (*Das Leben Jesu*, § 16). Perhaps not; but we have strong reasons for holding that the Absolute Causality—or, to use a term which we prefer, God—works out His deliberate purposes by frequently so arranging that the higher and more spiritual of the 'Laws,' by means of which He rules and regulates the Universe, should in some way override, and (in a

sense) supersede the action of the lower, and especially the more physical, laws.[1] Thus, for example, to give a rough illustration—a dead bird will fall to the ground in accordance with the physically universal 'Law' of gravitation, whereas a live bird, under the impulsion of its special vital powers, will rise superior to gravitation, and ascend into the heavens—a 'miracle' of the power of *life* to transcend the lower laws governing mere inert matter. So, too, of the spirit. Everywhere, indeed, and on all sides, we have evidences of the power of the higher law to control, and, as we have said, to supersede, the effects of the lower, passing through all grades of being, from inert matter up to self-conscious spirit, in which last-named order of existence we see evidences of a Personal Divine Spirit overruling the phenomena which appertain solely to the lower grades of being.

[1] In Harnack's *Das Wesen des Christentums*, there occurs the following remarkable passage: "Although the order of Nature is inviolable, we are not yet by any means acquainted with all the forces working in it, and acting reciprocally with other forces. Our acquaintance even with the forces inherent in matter, and with the field of their actions, is incomplete; while of psychic forces we know very much less. We see that a strong will, and a firm faith, exert an influence upon the life of the body, and produce phenomena which strike us as marvellous. Who is there up to now that has set any sure bounds to the province of the probable and the actual? No one. Who can say how far the influence of soul upon soul, and of soul upon body, reaches? No one. Who can still maintain that any extraordinary phenomenon that may appear in this domain is entirely based upon error and delusion?" This exactly puts the matter at issue with the materialist, and the scientific dogmatist.

But, at the same time, there was also, according to Strauss, another and secondary cause, which had contributed largely to the rise of the Gospel 'myths'; this was the extraordinary impression made by the Personality of Jesus upon His contemporaries. In this impression Strauss himself seems to share. "To me," he says (*Streitschriften*, iii. 145, 152, 153), "he is the greatest religious personality which history has brought to view. In his greatness, too, his natural endowment had, in my mind, the largest share. . . . His power over the minds of men, with which very likely also a physical power of healing was combined, which we may explain somewhat after the analogy of magnetic force, effected cures which must appear as miracles. His standpoint at the utmost height of religious self-consciousness, was expressed in lofty sayings, even as his pure human sense was revealed in edifying, and his originality in ingenious, discourse. His fame, like his person, was, from the beginning to the end of his life, extraordinary."

It may seem strange to us that a man who was capable of getting thus far within a measurable range of a comprehension of the transcendent Personality of Jesus, should yet finally fail to reach it after all! But the mind of Strauss was beclouded at the outset by an overstrained view of an intellectual system, which, perhaps, by its too complete inversion of the true sequence of

observation and *theory*, proved, in his case at least, a real obstacle to any arrival at the ultimate truth. Had Strauss observed more and dogmatized less, he might, with his naturally profound insight, and, we may well believe, his real honesty of purpose, have reached other and more accurate conclusions.

But the mythical theory of Strauss was developed still further, and pushed to yet greater extremes, by another and contemporary Hegelian, Bruno Bauer (1809–82),[1] who, after 1834, devoted himself exclusively to a scientific criticism of the Bible. Bauer's purpose at the outset, says Schweitzer, "was only to continue the work of Strauss. But the conception of myth and legend, of which the latter made use, was, Bauer thought, much too vague to explain the deliberate 'transformation of a personality.' In the place of myth, Bauer, therefore, set 'reflection.' The life which pulsates in the Gospel history is too vigorous to be explained as created by legend; it is real 'experience,' only not the experience of Jesus, but of the Church. The representation of this experience of the Church in the life of a Person is not the work of a number of persons, but of a single author. It is in this twofold aspect—

[1] He also belonged to the younger Hegelians, or 'Left Wing' party, and taught that immortality is merely the eternity of the Universal Reason, and that the 'God-Man' is not a single Person, but simply Humanity, and that the Godhead attains to consciousness first in human spirits.

as the composition of one man, embodying the experience of many—that the Gospel history is to be regarded. As religious art, it has a profound truth. When it is regarded from this point of view the difficulties, which are encountered in the endeavour to conceive it as real, immediately disappear."[1]

Bauer thus postulated not simply a number of evangelists as the first narrators of the Gospel story, but one man as the *inventor* of the whole. This primary originator, he averred, was Mark.[2]

But even Bauer hesitated to dismiss Jesus as a wholly fictitious character in history, from the mere results of an analysis of the Gospels, and especially the Gospel of Mark. He decided that a further investigation—this time of the structure and contents of the Pauline Epistles—was a necessity before arriving at any definite conclusions. This was then carried out by him and published later in his *Kritik der Paulinischen Briefe* (1850–51), and the results which he obtained therefrom were applied to the problem in the new edition of his *Criticism of the Gospel History* (*Kritik der Evangelien und Geschichte ihres Ursprungs*). His final conclusion is—there never was an historical Jesus!

[1] *The Quest of the Historical Jesus*, Eng. tr. p. 145.

[2] Most Hegelian theologians then regarded Matthew as the primary Gospel.

Thus, Schweitzer sums up (*op. cit.* p. 156): "From an examination of the Gospels [? and the Pauline Epistles], he concludes that the Jesus of the Gospels is the creation of the self-alienated Ego, and that He ceases to exist as soon as this is recognized. The formation of the Church, and the arising of the idea that the Jesus of the Gospels is the Messiah, are not two different things; they are one and the same thing; they coincide and synchronize; but the idea was only the imaginative conception of the Church, the first movement of its life, the religious expression of its experience.

"The question, which has so much exercised the minds of men—whether Jesus was the historic Christ—is answered in the sense, that everything that the historical Christ is, everything that is said of Him, everything that is known of Him, belongs to the world of imagination, that is of the Christian community, and, therefore, has nothing to do with any man who belongs to the real world."

The vitiating influence which deprived the criticism of Strauss of all real permanent value, also pervaded, and, in a still more exaggerated form, depreciated that of Bauer. And this was the necessity of making the phenomena of Christ and Christianity entirely square with the *a priori* reasoning of a philosophic system which can only justly be designated as a false and perverted

Hegelianism. If Hegel's God-Man—the actualization of the Idea—be realized only in Humanity *as a whole*, then the historic Christ, whom Hegel had recognized as its most perfect embodiment, becomes a mere phantom, which vanishes when an effort is made to grasp and comprehend it.[1] This conclusion follows inevitably from the fact that the Idea is actualized in a *generic* form only. But this view is a pure fiction of the imagination, and rests upon no established facts.[2] Moreover, there is not a shred of evidence to indicate—much less to prove—that Mark (or, indeed, any evangelist) invented out of the common consciousness the life of Christ, as depicted in the Gospels. Recent research has shown that all the Evangelists were compilers and biographers, and not originators in any sense. They had documents of various sorts to select from, as well as oral historic tradition, amongst the Twelve and their immediate suc-

[1] The theologians of the 'Right Wing,' the reader may here be reminded, held that the true incarnation of the divine Logos was to be found, not in a perfected human society—an impossible ideal, as all history clearly shows—but in a single Individual, whose life and teaching should regenerate the world.

[2] Such facts as mankind have gathered from experience go a long way towards proving that Humanity is very far from being divine, much less an embodiment of the divine Idea, which cannot be thought of as employing so imperfect and inadequate an expression of itself. The climax of absurdity, however, was reached when Auguste Comte, in his enthusiasm for humanity, gravely invited us to *worship* it! We are here irresistibly reminded of the well-known *dictum* of Thomas Carlyle, that he would as soon worship a wilderness of apes.

cessors, to incorporate. In short, it would be impossible to lay the finger upon any one man with whom the life could originate, even if the first century produced such a sublime and colossal genius, which also is more than doubtful. Neither had the 'Church' of that day the spiritual consciousness, or the intellectual ability, for such a task.

On the other hand, the Gospels throughout breathe the actual life of the period in which Jesus is said to have lived, and outline accurately, but variously, the marvellous Personality which He undoubtedly possessed. The figure of Jesus is also too human, and too true to daily life in its smaller details, to be the mere creation of the mythic Idea diffused throughout any community. It is an actual portrait drawn from life, not by one man but by many, who, it must be confessed, for the most part, but imperfectly understood the grandeur of the Personality which lived and moved and spake in their midst. And this fact has ever been recognized with a practical unanimity by all who have approached the study of the question, without previous bias, which moved them to explain away the facts that were presented for their consideration. Consequently it becomes impossible for a well-balanced mind to accept either the explanation of Reimarus, who found the basis of the story of Jesus in a deliberate imposture on the part of the disciples, or that

of Strauss, who sought its explanation in the 'transfiguration of a personality' by the general mythicizing tendencies of the age, or, again, that of Bauer, who postulated an original evangelist, who embodied the thoughts and aspirations of a community in his biography of a pseudo-historical Jesus. Each of these hypotheses of the origin of Christ and Christianity, which we may well believe "terrified the respective generations which saw them put forth," has rightly, since that time, sunk into the discredit and oblivion which was its inevitable and proper due.

The problem of the 'historic Jesus,' which was thus for a time practically shelved by the generation amongst whom Strauss and Bauer died, remained for all intents and purposes in abeyance until the opening years of the present century. During the last decade, however, it has again been brought to the front by a new school of Mythicists, who have been trained upon wholly different principles from those which had underlain the investigations of the members of the older school.

Stimulated and informed chiefly by the immense amount of new knowledge brought to light during recent years by critical theology and archæological research, as well as by the comparative study of religion, the mythical theory of Christianity has been revived and placed upon a new and, perhaps, less speculative basis than that of the Hegelian

dialectic. Many modern scholars have found—or thought that they have found—the existence of primitive and often world-wide myths, which in many cases can be compared and correlated with the cardinal doctrines of Christianity. The tenets of the latter, which are the most immediately and obviously assailed, are those of the Parthenogenetic Birth and the Resurrection of Jesus from the Dead. These two doctrines, more particularly, have, in many cases and somewhat hastily, been concluded to be mere variant forms of world-wide stories of similar and mythical events.

But this view of the narratives in question, it is often forgotten, is, after all, no new discovery of the present enlightened age. Readers of the earlier patristic literature, and especially the works of the Apologists and Fathers of the second and third centuries, will remember that very similar theories were broached, and a like discussion was carried on, even in those far-back times. The 'parallelism' between the Christian stories and the heathen myths—so far as it exists—was pointed out nearly eighteen hundred years ago, and the differences between them (often great and fundamental) were also then insisted on. The battle, however, which was then won by Christianity, has, it would appear, now to be fought out again, this time with a new formation, and new weapons, on each side.

But the mythologists of the new and modern school have gone even further than the majority of those of the earlier part of the last century. The latter (following Strauss) for the most part admitted an historical basis for the personality of Jesus, and merely maintained that a complete and impenetrable halo of myth had been thrown around Him. The latest modern advocates of the mythical theory (following Bauer), dispense with His existence altogether.

We will quote here but a few typical examples of the new school: Mr. J. M. Robertson in his *Christianity and Mythology* (1900), and *Pagan Christs: Studies in Comparative Hierology* (1903), has sought to resolve the whole Gospel story into a mixture mainly of Hebraic and pagan mythic elements. Synchronously with the publication of the last-named work there appeared *Das Christusproblem: Grundlinien zu einer Socialtheologie* of Pastor Kalthoff, of Bremen, who affirmed that the whole of the phenomena of Christianity could be explained without the help of an historical Jesus, by recognizing the force of a great social movement which had begun in the first century amongst the 'lower' classes within the Roman Empire—a theory, however, which he was subsequently compelled to modify in some degree. Kalthoff declared that he had long previously tried to understand Jesus, but, in spite of this, had altogether failed to do so. One wonders

whether he ever tried in the *right* way![1] That He is to be found merely by means of any process of dialectic, or in any mere scheme of social reform, may well be doubted. At the same time, it is quite credible, and probable, that such mental processes, and the impulse which His life supplied and maintained ever afterwards for the betterment of the poor and the downtrodden[2] will, if rightly used, and duly considered in their true relations and meaning, throw much light upon both the question of His historic character and mission, and the overwhelming need, which has existed and ever must exist, in the world of all ages of such a living spiritual and moral force embodied in a concrete and personal human form. This latter fact is, indeed, indisputable, and hence, for this reason alone, His present influence in the world is either overlooked, or underrated, by thinkers of mythicizing proclivities.

Another present-day theorist, the Assyriologist P. Jensen, in his *Das Gilgamesch Epos in der*

[1] Those modern thinkers who—following a current fashion of the day—underrate, or even deny, the prime importance of great *personalities*, and their immense effects upon the world's history and progress, will *never* understand Him, or indeed any great historical character.

[2] The teaching of Jesus, it is true, gave rise (1) to the abolition of slavery, and (2) to the relief of the poor. But the doctrine of the personal freedom of man, and systems for the relief of the poor simply, do not, as many people now appear to suppose, constitute Christianity. 'Social service' is no doubt a duty, but it is not an *end*; and poverty, in the vast majority of cases, is due to lack of initiative and an absence of individual ideals.

Weltliteratur (1906),[1] has tried, but without success, to show that the whole life of Jesus, as narrated in the Gospels and Epistles, is simply a derivative from the Babylonian Gilgamesh Epic (circa 2000 B.C.) and, therefore, of course, nothing but a pure myth.[2]

And, last of all, Professor Drews has arisen—also in Germany—who, in his already notorious *Die Christusmythe*, undertakes to account for the origin of Jesus Christ and Christianity, by means of a synthesis of three then existing and widely divergent factors, viz. the prevalence of certain old Hebrew variants of an ancient cult of the Redeemer sun-god, worshipped secretly in Palestine as 'Jesus' (Joshua), and openly elsewhere, under various symbols, the concepts of the post-exilic Jewish Apocalyptists, and the widespread pagan notion of a dying and rising 'Saviour,' who bore various names, Adonis, Attis, Osiris, etc., in the different countries where he was worshipped. These three widely divergent ideas, he thinks, combining at a favourable moment, formed a precipitate in the mind of the Church under the influence and teaching of St. Paul, whose 'spectral' Jesus developed, during the second century, into, on the one hand, the historical Jesus

[1] Cp. also his *Moses, Jesus, Paulus*[2] (1909).

[2] Professor B. W. Bacon says, in his usual trenchant and outspoken style (*Hibbert Journal*, July 1911, p. 739): "Jensen's New Testament criticism is elaborate bosh."

of flesh and blood, and, on the other, into the transcendent Christ, united in one and the same Person, of the Christian Church of that and subsequent ages.[1]

Such, stated briefly, is at present the 'last word' of anti-Christian Mythology upon the great problem of the nature and existence of Jesus Christ. The famous 'Quest,' which has occupied the minds of so many theologians and thinkers of Europe, during the past one hundred and fifty years, seems once again to have ended—for some at least—in the discovery of the fact that there was really, after all, no historical Jesus to look for! Paradoxical, and even absurd, as this result may appear to us, it is nevertheless a conclusion with which we have to reckon, since it has been reached by certain perfectly sincere and able, if not altogether impartially minded men, who are professedly, and no doubt really, anxious to reach the whole truth regarding this important matter.

And the question which lies before us now, and demands our most serious attention is this: Does this view of the matter represent, after all, the truth; nay, more, does it even contain any elements of the truth? This, we repeat, is a

[1] These three prime factors are said to have been first resolved as a *pure Idea* in the mind of St. Paul (and perhaps a few of his followers), and then to have become finally an *embodied Personality*—the objective Jesus Christ—in the Church of the second century.

most important—a *vital* question for the whole world. For upon its *final* answer will depend how far Christianity—that is the teaching and ideals of Jesus Christ—is to continue to be a living power for good in the civilization of the future. For, if our existing civilization—with all its grave defects—once loses its present *spiritual* motive-power, and the living and divine energy which guides its course and constitutes its very inner being, and which Christianity alone can supply, then this civilization must inevitably sink into the same welter of anarchy and decay—physical, moral, and spiritual—into which *all* the previous civilizations of antiquity fell before they were swept from off the very face of the earth. "Man doth not live by bread alone; but by every utterance of the mouth of Jahveh doth man live," says the far-seeing Deuteronomist; and his words are echoed in a still higher sense by the Man of Galilee.[1] Even so, we privileged people who dwell amidst all the wondrous material resources and inventions of this twentieth century, will find that we cannot subsist upon such 'bread' alone; that other, and more spiritual, sustenance—the "Word out of the mouth of Jahveh"—is just as needful for us to-day as it was to them of old; nay, more needful, because our senses are more distracted and drugged by the specious glamour

[1] See Deut. viii. 3; Matt. iv. 4. In the latter, the saying is more completely spiritualized.

of a material and transient prosperity. And, therefore, woe will betide the nation, or the people which is heedless of the warning, which refuses to hear that Word, and neglects to follow its behests.

PART I

THE HISTORICAL DATA

CHAPTER I.

PRE-CHRISTIAN MESSIANIC CONCEPTS.

In his reference to pre-Christian Messianic concepts, Professor Drews lays considerable stress upon the influence, which, he thinks, the idea of an expected Messiah, who should *suffer*, instead of *triumph*, had in preparing the way for a fusion of Messianism with the pagan concept of a periodically dying God, which is found in practically all the great nature-cults of Western Asia. And, in connection with this alleged *rapprochement* between two originally very different concepts,[1] he points in particular to two distinct portions of the Old Testament Scriptures—Ps. xxii. and Isa. liii.—in support of his thesis.

Now, it is true, that for many centuries past, in fact, ever since the early days of Christianity, it has been the common view amongst Christians that Ps. xxii. is Messianic, *i.e.* that it was written solely, or at all events chiefly, with a view to foretell the sufferings of the future Messiah. Some

[1] *i.e.* a suffering and superhuman *Man* (Jewish Messianism) and a dying *God* (Paganism).

theologians, indeed, have gone even further than this; they have held that it is, to use the words of Cassiodorus, 'not so much a prophecy as *history*'—a description of the sufferings of Christ, written beforehand, under the special enlightenment of the Holy Spirit of God.

This is practically the view taken by so recent and accomplished a writer as Bishop Alexander in his Bampton Lectures (1876), on *The Witness of the Psalms to Christ and Christianity*, and even still later commentators have echoed these sentiments.

Many modern and competent scholars have, however, rejected this view, either partially or wholly. Dr. Cheyne, *e.g.*, who assigns the Psalm to the period of Nehemiah, sees in the sufferer here depicted a description of the 'ideal Israelite'—'the flower of Israel,' the genius of the *nation* "in word and act, in life and in death, rivalling and surpassing the Israel and Moses of antiquity."

"No individual," he says, "can be the speaker. . . . Nor can the depressed Jewish people be the speaker; stanzas 3 and 4 show that an Israel within the larger Israel here pours out its grief and woes. These woes it shares with all who have not practically rejected the Jewish law, and found means to conciliate those whom true Israelites ought, as far as possible, to shun; but a spiritual sorrow is theirs, which the mass of imperfect, though not faithless, Israelites cannot

fully realize. They are constant in prayer, but how useless it seems. . . ."[1]

And again: "The poem represents a company, or community. It is a complaint of highly-strung natures, brought up on the doctrine of earthly retribution, and surprised that they meet with contempt and ignominy, which are only worthy of malefactors. And the grandeur of the Psalm consists in this, that in spite of the terrible strain put upon their faith, this divinely-given quality does not fail them. Though God seems to have forsaken them, He is still their God."[2]

We have thus, at the outset, two sharply defined and alternative views of the Psalm,—that it is (*a*) a Messianic prophecy throughout, or (*b*) a personification of the pious remnant in Judah, who are sharing in the disasters and downfall which have befallen their nation.

Now, it is evident that the ordinary current Messianic interpretation derives its strength largely from the quotation and mention of this Psalm in various parts of the New Testament. Thus, we find in Matt. xxvii. 46, in the first of the seven traditional sayings from the Cross, Jesus utters the opening words of the Psalm: *Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani.*[3]

[1] *Introduction to the Psalms*, vol. i. p. 86.

[2] *The Christian Use of the Psalter*, p. 93 f.

[3] It is worth while, perhaps, noting here, that Mark gives this saying more exactly in the then vernacular Aramaic: *Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani.* The original Hebrew words of the Psalm are:

In John xix. 20, the writer claims that the Psalmist's words, in ver. 18, were fulfilled by the partition of Jesus' clothing amongst the soldiers who carried out the sentence of death. The scribes and elders, who came to witness the scene, are also reported to have re-echoed vers. 7 and 8 in taunting Jesus,—an unlikely proceeding, had they recognized a Messianic character in the Psalm. Furthermore, vers. 14 and 16 are generally regarded as describing the pains of the Crucifixion, and, finally, there is, in the Epistle to the Hebrews, an express quotation of ver. 22, as having been spoken by Our Lord Himself on this occasion.

Now, at first sight, these various quotations and references might be, and indeed have been, taken as proof conclusive of the wholly Messianic and prophetic character of the Psalm. But this is a somewhat hasty inference to draw. Let us look a little more closely into the matter; for it does not at all necessarily follow that because Our Lord Himself quotes one verse, as reflecting His state of mind in that dread hour, and various Christian writers have likewise subsequently seen the parallel between several circumstances connected with the Crucifixion and the Psalmist's lament, either that the Psalm has throughout this

Eli, Eli, lama 'azabtani. Neither of the later Gospels (Luke and John) report it, and the apocryphal Peter has instead: "My *power*, my *power*," etc.

meaning, or, further, that this was ever the interpretation of it by any body, or sect, of Jews in pre-Christian times. This latter point is, indeed, of the highest importance for our present purpose, as will presently appear.

To make even a brief analysis of the contents of the Psalm is beyond the scope of this chapter. We will, however, note a few salient points where its general inapplicability, as a Messianic prophecy, is patent.

If the first half of the opening strophe has a peculiar suitability to the occasion (and few would dispute that assertion), it is equally clear that the next part of it has not. Apart from the unsuitability of the phrase—(literally) "the words of my roaring"—to the recorded utterances of Jesus, there is a querulousness about it, and, indeed, about the whole Psalm, which is utterly foreign to the dignified and resigned demeanour of the great Sufferer. Of His seven extant "Words" from the Cross, during the agonies of the Crucifixion, only one is a *lament*. Furthermore, vers. 4 and 5 of the Psalm, implying that God had delivered the forefathers of the Jewish nation, but not the present speaker, seem also inapplicable, as implying a lack of resignation to His Father's will, and an unwillingness to die for others, which are not characteristics of Jesus Christ.

Neither, once more, does the concluding portion of the Psalm (vers. 22–31) in any way express

the kind of triumph achieved by Jesus in His victory over the grave by a triumphant Resurrection from the Dead and Ascension into Heaven. It accords better with the idea of a restoration to favour with God of a distressed and temporarily forsaken people, who, after a period of trial and bitter experience, have realized more fully the true source of their strength and comfort, and returned to the service of God.

That the Psalm has, *in parts* at least, and in a secondary sense, a subjective applicability to Our Lord's experiences on the Cross, and that the author of it may have unconsciously, or subconsciously, depicted them here and there throughout it, the present writer is far from denying. Nor would he aver that the early Christian writers were in error in seizing upon and emphasizing these points for the edification of their readers. But this is a very different thing from saying that the Psalm is a deliberately drawn picture of a suffering Messiah which was recognized and accepted by any Jews, as individuals, or as a society, during the pre-Christian period, as Professor Drews would have it to be the case, in order to suit the peculiar exigencies of his mythic theory.

There is, however, no reason whatever to suppose that this Psalm had ever, before the time of Our Lord, a *Messianic* interpretation attached to it. Its writer comes forward as the spokesman

and representative of his pious but depressed brethren, and by a bold and poetical personification of these in his own person, he utters the previous laments, and concluding clearly expressed hopes and triumphs, which he feels must arise out of the justice and goodness of God, upon whom he relies and in whom he never for long entirely loses faith.

The consideration of the Messianic character of the 53rd chapter of our present Book of Isaiah opens up a number of critical problems of the highest importance, and the most complex character, to which it would be quite impossible to do anything like justice, within the limits at our disposal. We will, therefore, condense, and, where possible, present summaries of probable and established results.

Stated briefly, the problem before us here is —just as in the case of Ps. xxii.—a question of two opposing interpretations. That is to say, the writer has in his mind either (*a*) a single individual, undergoing pains and degradations for the salvation of others, in short, a suffering Messiah, or (*b*) that he is referring by means of a bold poetic personification, couched in the first person, to the sufferings and degradation of the faithful remnant, who share, along with the unfaithful Israelites, in the oppression and humiliation of the nation in their exile. The whole problem of this prophecy, indeed, is inextricably involved in that of a number

of other prophecies (Isa. xl.–lxvi.) uttered by one, or more, of the later 'Isaiahs,' which have been well described by Koënig as forming quite a separate treatise, and entitled by him *The Exiles' Book of Consolation.*

His view, therefore, and that of probably the great majority of modern critical scholars, both German and English, is that the Servant of Jahveh (*Ebed Jahveh*), depicted generally throughout these chapters, is (just as in the case of the sufferer in the Psalm we have been considering) a personification of the Jewish people.[1] Of course, we find here, as previously, passages breathing intense *personal* interest—interest which at first sight seems too deep and too intense for mere personification. This fact is fully admitted by Cheyne, who says:[2] "Certainly it is as clear as the day that the Servant of Yahwè is more like an individual in chap. liii. than elsewhere. . . ." But he adds: "Still . . . it seems to me unsafe to separate this portrait of the Servant from those which precede and follow it."

Now, as we have already said, a pretty general consensus of recent scholars, who have made a special study of these 'Messianic' passages, has agreed that it is a nation, or rather a pious portion

[1] For his arguments fully set forth, see *The Exiles' Book of Consolation* (1899); cp. also the art. 'Servant of the Lord,' *Ency. Bibl.*, which gives also the names of the supporters of each view.

[2] Intr. to the *Book of Isaiah*, p. 305.

of a nation, which is here primarily referred to, not an individual, in the true sense, whether Our Lord Himself, or any one else.[1] And their chief reasons for taking the *Collective* view of the 'servant' are these: (1) The whole language of the chapter implies that the events described in it are then and there going on, or have been happening in the recent past, not going to happen in a, more or less, distant future.

Thus, the servant '*grew* up as a sapling'; 'he *had* no form nor majesty,' etc.; 'despised *was* he, and forsaken of men'; he *was* 'cruelly treated and opened not his mouth'—an expression which would well describe the patience and resignation of the pious remnant, amidst the general

[1] Those scholars who hold to the *Individual* view have suggested various historic personalities (other than Our Lord Himself), as representing this 'servant'—involving often widely different dates for the utterance of the prophecy, which is now almost universally assigned to the Exilic period.

Thus, Thirtle proposes *Hezekiah*; Winckler and Kittel *Zerubbabel*; Sellin, *Jehoiachin* (but see Jer. xxii. 30), etc. Cyrus finds a supporter in Weir. The portrait, however, does not seem to suit any of these—Cyrus least of all.

Gressmann has suggested the god Adonis (Tammuz), and thinks that chap. liii. is, in reality, a hymn belonging to the mysteries of that cult, celebrating the birth, death and resurrection of the god, sung by the Mystæ on his deathday.

But, apart from the fact that there is very little evidence (except in Ezek. viii. 14) that this nature-cult obtained any hold upon the people of Judah, Adonis is always depicted as a *beautiful youth*, whereas the 'servant' has *no comeliness*; and, moreover, is a person 'despised and rejected by men,' not, as in the case of Adonis, bewailed by them with passionate lamentation.

impatience of the less righteous and resigned among the exiles.[1]

Further, the expression in ver. 10, 'he would see a seed, he would prolong his day,' accords better with the experiences of a restored nation than with those of any Messiah. Indeed, the whole tenor of the chapter seems not (in any primary sense) consciously to refer to the future. (2) There is no evidence either that the writer believed in, or held to, any scheme of *personal* resurrection, which it would be necessary to show, if the passage is held to be directly and primarily a prophecy of Christ. This point will be realized more clearly later on, in discussing the Apocalyptic ideas regarding the Messiah. It will suffice, therefore, to say here, that this chapter does not give any *direct* support to, or furnish any *direct* evidence of, a belief in an individual Messiah, who, at some future time, would suffer and die and rise again. The writer's interest is in the immediate present, or the future that is close upon the present, and the Jewish nation as he then knew it. This nation had been humbled and brought very low indeed, so that many thoughtful men despaired of both the present and the future. But still he feels assured that this humiliation will not endure for ever, but will be followed shortly by an exaltation in the presence of their enemies, and a

[1] Dr. Cheyne's text and translation is used here.

return to their own land, there to serve Jahveh as aforetime.

But here, again—as we have noticed before—the points of applicability have naturally been seized upon by Christian writers of a later time, and a very beautiful and touching picture of the Messiah has been drawn, by the help of the language and imagery of this chapter. Still, the crucial point in this matter, after all, is, not whether the original writers did, or did not, *unconsciously* depict Christ in these prophecies, or even whether subsequent Christian interpreters are right, or wrong, in reading therein portraitures and predictions of a future Messiah; it is not either of these points that is important for our present purpose, but the question whether *any* of the Jewish people in pre-Christian times *ever recognized* a prefiguration and portrait of the Messiah that was to be. We ourselves think that there is the strongest evidence to show that they never did; and, consequently, that they did not look forward to such a suffering Messiah. But, in order to determine this, it will be necessary to examine more particularly the Apocalyptic literature, which intervenes between the close of the Old Testament canon, and the birth of Jesus.

Before doing this, however, we will notice the close parallel which exists between many of the words and passages in Isa. xl.–lxvi. (the 'Servant' chapters), and the *Book of Wisdom* ii. 12–21,

wherein the 'righteous man' is depicted by the author. The latter passage sounds, as Koënig says, almost like an echo of the former. The righteous man (ὁ δίκαιος) of the *Book of Wisdom* affirms his knowledge of God; he calls himself, as in many of the 'Servant' passages in Isaiah, παῖς Κυρίου, 'servant of the Lord.'

Again, Koënig notes that *Wisdom* iii. 1–8 is also a close parallel to this passage in 'Isaiah.' And this parallelism in both cases is strong presumptive evidence that the writer of the 'Isaiah' passage, by the righteous but suffering servant, whom he portrays, had the same object in his mind as the author of the passages in *Wisdom*, viz. the pious section of his countrymen. And, indeed, we find that this view of the passage continued to be held by the Jews in the earlier days of Christianity. From the *Dialogue with Trypho*, of Justin Martyr, it is to be inferred that Trypho and his friends saw in the 'servant of Jahveh' only the righteous Jew who was still groaning under oppression. At any rate, they nowhere admit what Justin affirms—that here, or elsewhere, the Old Testament speaks of a *suffering* Messiah.[1]

This, of course, may be set down to the proverbial Jewish obstinacy in refusing to recognize a portraiture of Jesus; but, elsewhere in the *Dialogue*, they are described as yielding to the

[1] See chaps. xxxvi., xxxix., xlix., lxviii.

arguments adduced for identifying Jesus with the Messiah expected by the Jews.

Furthermore, in the tract known as the *Altercatio Simonis et Theophili* (ed. Harnack), it is definitely stated that 'we' (*i.e.* the Jews), *nec passum* [Christum] *in Scripturis nostris invenimus*; and this would seem to have been the *vox universa* of Judaism in all ages before the time of Christ.[1]

But the most conclusive proof of all, that the pre-Christian Jews of all classes did not recognize in Ps. xxii. and Isa. liii. a portraiture of the Messiah in this Sufferer, is the fact that such sufferings were not regarded as in any sense Messianic by the Jews in Our Lord's time—nay, not even by His own disciples, who of all their countrymen might be supposed most readily to recognize Jesus in this portrait.

Thus, when Jesus announced His unalterable resolve to become a sacrifice at Jerusalem (Matt. xvi. 22 f.),[2] His disciples refused to accept such a view of the Messiah's office. This significant fact is brought out very plainly by the two earlier Synoptists. Both say that Peter, as the mouthpiece of the rest, even rebuked Him for such a

[1] The concept of a dying Messiah was 'foolishness' to the educated Greek; but it was also a 'stumbling block' to all the Jews. The latter *never* advanced beyond the idea of the offered victim in the sacrificial system, while mystical Jews dispensed with a victim altogether.

[2] Cp. also the following: xx. 17–19; Mark viii. 31–33, ix. 31, x. 33; Luke xviii. 31, xxiv. 6, 7.

resolution, and all three distinctly imply acquiescence on the part of the others in Peter's rejection of this idea of the Messianic office. Mark and Luke further add that, 'they *understood not* that saying.'[1] It was, as a matter of fact, not within their purview of the work of the Messiah, or that of their contemporaries.

Upon these, and other grounds, which we are unable to detail here, we may, therefore, unhesitatingly affirm that Professor Drews' proposition, that there was amongst certain sects of Jews of the pre-Christian and Christian eras, under the influence of such writings as Ps. xxii. and Isa. liii.,[2] an *idea* of a Messiah who should suffer humiliation and death, is an entirely groundless supposition.

And this conclusion, furthermore, is confirmed by an examination of the Messianic concepts of the writing prophets of Judah in the eighth century B.C.—the forerunners of the authors of Ps. xxii. and Isa. liii. These invariably connect Israel's deliverance with an idealized Davidic

[1] This fact in itself quite negatives Professor Drews' theory that the disciples were merely members of a brotherhood who worshipped a *suffering* Messiah-God, named Jesus, which Messiah was to be identified with the dying cult-god of pagan nature-religion.

[2] Isa. liii. 12 was interpreted by post-Christian (and probably by pre-Christian) Jews of *Moses*, who 'poured out his soul unto death' (Ex. xxxii. 32), and was 'numbered with the transgressors (those who died in the wilderness), and bare the sins of many,' that he might atone for the sin of the golden calf (*Sōtāh.* 14). It was reserved for Christians, later on, to recognize in it a truer portrait of the historical Jesus.

monarch, full of the Spirit of Jahveh: so writes Isaiah in ix. 6 f., xi. 1 f.[1] (cp. also Mic. v. 2).

Jeremiah, again, speaks (xxiii. 5 f.) of a Messiah, who will be a 'righteous sprout' of David's stem, *i.e.* a man of royal descent, and doubtless, in his mind, a king. Ezekiel also uses similar language (cp. xxxiv. 23, xxxvii. 24 f.).

The figure of the coming Messiah, in these writers, is still vague and undefined, the picture of a worthy and idealized, but earthly, prince, sitting upon the throne of David and executing judgment and mercy with almost divine power and impartiality.

In a later part of the present *Book of Isaiah*, this ideal prince seems to be identified with Cyrus, King of Persia, who is to be the anointed of Jahveh, and the divine grace which had previously been promised to David is now transferred to the *ideal* Israel (the 'servant of Jahveh') as a whole.[2]

With Haggai and Zechariah the Messianic expectations are connected with Zerubbabel, who is represented in Ezek. ii. 2 (Neh. vii. 7) as the leader of a band of captives who have returned from Babylonia to Jerusalem. Thus, he receives

[1] The genuineness of these prophecies—as utterances of Isaiah—has been disputed by Hackmann, Marti, Volz and Cheyne. But this question does not materially affect the argument here.

[2] See Isa. liii. 3. Many scholars think it is also the *collective Israel* that is meant by the writer of Dan. vii. 13, 18, 22, 27, under the phrase of the 'Son of Man,' which Our Lord adopted as His own designation.

in Haggai the significant title of 'My Servant,' and the prophet foretells that, when the powers that are hostile to Israel shall have been overthrown, he will receive special proofs of the divine favour and protection.

In like manner, when we turn to and examine the works of the various popular writers of Apocalyptic leanings, who, for the most part, succeeded the canonical authors, we still find the same clear intimations of the type of Messiah who was universally expected. In *no* case do we ever read of a *suffering* Messiah. Such a concept is conspicuously absent throughout the whole of Jewish post-canonical literature.

In the books forming the Old Testament *Apocrypha*, the doctrine of Messianism does not occupy an important place. We may see, however, even there, that the hopes and expectations, as moulded and set forth by the prophetic writers, were not altogether forgotten. It is, however, in the *Apocalyptic* literature that we meet with its greatest development. But here, again, there is, as we have said, no *suffering* Messiah. Broadly speaking, we find that where a *personal* Messiah is looked forward to, it is a *triumphant Monarch* who is to be the avenger and vindicator of Israel, or the righteous portion of Israel. He is to be either (1) a purely earthly, or (2) a heavenly *Man*, endowed with supernormal powers and attributes. The Messianic kingdom to be established by him

is to be, in like manner, either an ideal city-state upon earth, or a spiritual city in the heavens, to which the 'saved' are to be transferred after the destruction of their earthly enemies.

Thus—to run briefly through these writings—in the *Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs*, a priestly Messiah of the tribe of Levi is expected (Lev. xviii. §§ 2–5, 8, 10, 14–18).[1] He will judge as king; will bind Beliar, and open the gates of Paradise to the righteous. In the *Psalms of Solomon* the Messiah is to be descended from David. He will be a righteous king, who is pure from sin—in the Jewish and legal sense of the term;—but his kingdom is to be of only temporary duration. In the *Sibylline Oracles*, He is defined as a holy king, who shall come to sway the sceptre of every land;[2] and he will reign for all ages. In the *Book of Jubilees* the Messiah looked for seems to be a prince sprung from the tribe of Judah. Even in the allegorizing system of *Philo of Alexandria* room is made for an actual, and not merely ideal, Messiah sprung from the tribe of Judah. He will, however, be chiefly a man of war.[3]

In two of the various 'revelations' contained in the *Apocalypse of Baruch* we also find that the Messiah looked for is a warrior, who will slay the enemies of Israel with his own hand.

[1] Sometimes a *royal* Messiah of the tribe of Judah is spoken of.

[2] ἥξει δ' ἅγνος ἄναξ πάσης γῆς σκῆπτρα κρατήσων.

[3] καταστραταρχῶν καὶ πολεμῶν ἔθνη.

In short, turn whithersoever we will, in all the extant Jewish literature, canonical and otherwise, belonging to the centuries preceding the Christian era, we find that wherever a clearly defined and personal Messiah is spoken of, the concepts of *power* and of *dominion* are attached to him, but *never* those of rejection and (apparent) failure in his mission. In like manner, nothing is said of *suffering* and *death*. Practically the only exceptions to this rule, in the whole field of Jewish literature, would be Ps. xxii. and Isa. liii., if these are to be taken as referring directly and consciously to a coming personal Messiah.

But, as we have endeavoured to make clear, there are many and weighty reasons why these pictures should be referred to *Israel*—the pious portion of suffering Israel—as the ideal 'servant' of God. And not least amongst these reasons is the fact that they form the solitary exceptions to a general picture of a powerful and triumphant Messiah, who will establish either upon earth, or in heaven, after the wicked and the oppressors have been destroyed by him, an ideal kingdom, wherein universal prosperity and happiness will be the marked characteristics of his sway.

That these concepts, common amongst all Jews, were never realized, and that Christian thought, subsequently to the advent of Jesus Christ, recognized this fact, and turned instinctively to the truer concept—a *spiritual* victory and a *spiritual*

kingdom, issuing out of earthly defeat, and apparent failure—does not in the least affect the point at issue. It was then—subsequently to the time of Christ—seen for the first time that the portrait of the Suffering Israel marvellously fitted, and harmonized completely, with the circumstances of the life and death of the *typical* Israelite—Jesus Christ; and that He was, after all, the *true* Servant of Jahveh, and the Saviour of the human race.

But such a portrait of the Messiah was never recognized before that time by any Jew, or sect of Jews, or even at the time of His advent; and it still remains unrecognized by the Jewish race of to-day.[1]

[1] W. R. Smith and E. Kautzsch sum up the matter thus: "That the Jews in the time of Christ believed in a suffering Messiah is, to say the least, unproved and highly improbable" (*Ency. Bibl.*, art. 'Messiah,' § 9, ref. to De Wette, *Opuscula*; Wünsche, *Die Leiden des Messias*, 1870).

CHAPTER II.

THE JESUS OF THE PRIMITIVE GOSPEL AND THE LOGIA [40–50 A.D.?].

It is now a generally accepted *dictum* of Criticism that, if we would comply with the demands of modern scientific history, we must get *behind* the Gospels, in order to obtain a knowledge of the actual life and teaching of Jesus.[1] Our present Gospels, it is urged—and with some truth—are largely accreted with contemporary, and later, views *about* Jesus, views not necessarily wrong, or superfluous, it may here be added, but, by reason of which the *purely historical* Figure is, to some extent, obscured and hidden from our view.

[1] With regard to the claim of the Gospels generally to be seriously treated as historical, after they have undergone a critical sifting, Professor Harnack very truly remarks (*Die Chronologie der Altchristlichen Litteratur*, vol. i. pp. viii, ix): "There was a time . . . when people fancied themselves obliged to consider the most ancient Christian literature, inclusive of the New Testament, a mass of deceits and falsifications. That time has passed away. . . . The oldest literature of the Church is, in its main points, and in most of its details, treated in a literary-historical way, truthful and reliable."

Now many and various attempts have been made at different times to discover this 'historical Jesus,' most of which are recorded in Schweitzer's famous book, *The Quest of the Historical Jesus.* Setting all these aside, however, as unsuitable for our present purpose, let us see whether it be possible, in the light of more modern knowledge, to find in these same Gospels a *substratum* of undoubted biographical fact, and ethical teaching, which will establish the actual existence of the great Teacher and Saviour as He is said to have appeared amongst men, nearly nineteen centuries ago.

Amongst the many tentative essays towards this end which have been made of recent years, and which, we think, fulfil the *canons* of scientific history, as these are laid down by historians, are two or three which we may examine and avail ourselves of, so far as they promise to prove useful for our purpose.

And in the first place we will notice that of Professor Schmiedel, who sets out from what we may term a '*minimum* basis,' and lays down the following preliminary *canon* of historical criticism :[1] "When a profane historian finds before him an historical document, which testifies to the worship of a hero unknown to other sources, he attaches first and foremost importance to those features which cannot be deduced merely from the fact of

[1] *Ency. Bibl.*, art. 'Gospels,' § 131.

his worship; and he does so on the simple and sufficient ground that they would not be found in this source, unless the author had met with them as fixed data of tradition."

But he further continues: "The same fundamental principle may safely be applied in the case of the Gospels, for they are also all of them written by worshippers of Jesus.

"We now have, accordingly, the advantages . . . of being in a position to recognize something as being worthy of belief, even without being able to say, or even called upon to inquire, whether it comes from the original Mark, from *Logia*, from oral tradition, or from any other quarter that may be alleged. The relative priority becomes a matter of indifference, because the absolute priority—that is the origin in real tradition—is certain. In such points the question as to credibility becomes independent of the synoptical question. Here the clearest cases are those in which only one Evangelist, or two, have *data* of this class, and the second, or third, or both, are found to have taken occasion to alter these in the interests of the reverence due to Jesus. If we discover any such points, even if only a few, they guarantee not only their own contents, but much more. For, in that case, one may hold as credible all else which agrees in character with these, and is, in other respects, not open to suspicion."

In accordance with the above rule, Professor

Schmiedel finds *nine* passages, which he terms elsewhere 'Foundation pillars,' upon which to build a Life of Jesus, which may lay claim to historical certainty, in the modern sense of the term.

The passages selected are: Mark x. 18 ('Why callest thou Me good?'); Matt. xii. 32 f. ('Blasphemy against the Son of Man can be forgiven'); Mark iii. 31 ('The relatives of Jesus thought Him beside Himself'); Mark xiii. 32 ('Of that day and that hour knoweth no man,' etc.); Mark xv. 34 ('My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?'); Mark viii. 12 ('There shall no sign be given unto this generation'); Mark vi. 5 f. ('Jesus was able to do no mighty work, save healing a few sick folk in Nazareth,' etc.); Mark viii. 14–20 ('Jesus warns the disciples against the leaven of the Pharisees,' etc.), and, lastly, Mark xi. 5, where Jesus sends an answer to the Baptist's inquiry as to whether He were the Messiah or not.[1]

Now, we gather from a careful examination of these 'Foundation pillars,' which are of a form that cannot be conceived as originating mythically, and gathering round a non-existent personality, as actual sayings and doings on his part, the following outline sketch of the historic Jesus: He was a Man who went about the country doing good, and gathered round Him a band of followers; He pardoned calumnious representations of Himself

[1] *Ency. Bibl.*, art. 'Gospels,' § 139.

and His teaching; He recognized the supreme goodness of His Father, God; He was considered to be mad by His relatives; He sent a message to John the Baptist, His contemporary, which seems to imply an affirmative answer to the question put by the latter, as to whether He were the Christ; He warned His disciples against the current, orthodox, teaching of the Pharisees; He knew not the day, or hour, of the future coming of the 'Son of Man'; He wondered at the unbelief which He encountered in His own land, and, finally, He was deserted by all, even (as He thought) by God, and probably put to death.[1] In all this there is nothing that can be construed as mythical, or even legendary,[2] and we are, therefore, justified in inferring, when the evidence set forth receives corroboration elsewhere, that such a man actually existed, and did, and said, what he is represented here as doing and saying. As Dr. Schmiedel truly adds: "They (the passages in question) prove that he really did exist, and that the Gospels contain at least some absolutely trustworthy facts concerning him. If passages of this kind were wholly wanting in them, it would be impossible to prove to a sceptic that any historical

[1] This saying certainly *implies* this, and occurs in a narrative portion of the Gospel, which definitely states it.

[2] These two terms are not always sufficiently distinguished. *Myth* is primitive, and very crude, science, or philosophy, in the making; *Legend* is crude and distorted history which gathers round persons.

value whatever was to be assigned to the Gospels; he would be in a position to declare the picture of Jesus contained in them to be purely a work of phantasy, and could remove the person of Jesus from the field of history."[1]

So far Dr. Schmiedel and his *minimum* basis: let us now turn to another similar view which attains to further, and somewhat more detailed, results. Speaking of our present Gospels, and the historic Jesus, Dr. van Manen says: "As for their origin, the Gospels, on close comparison, point us back to an 'oldest' written Gospel (*τὸ εὐαγγέλιον*), which unfortunately does not exist for us, except in so far as we can recover any traces of it preserved in later recensions. Perhaps it began somewhat as follows: 'In the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Cæsar, Pontius Pilate being Governor of Judæa . . . in the priesthood of Annas and Caiaphas . . . there came down to Capernaum, a city of Galilee, Jesus Christ, the Son of God'; and then proceeded to sketch, somewhat in the following order, His appearance at Capernaum, His casting out of dæmons, the proclamation of the Kingdom of God, the transfiguration, the final journey to Jerusalem, His passion, death and resurrection. Nothing else was said as yet of His origin, birth, early life, meeting with John, baptism in Jordan, temptation

[1] Schmiedel has replied to critics of this passage in his preface to Neumann's *Jesus*, *q.v.*

in the wilderness, nor much of consequence regarding His mission as a religious teacher and preacher in Galilee."[1]

If we might assume the above as the *results* of a critical inquiry into our present narratives, the position we are seeking to establish would be gained. But it will be evident to every thoughtful reader that such a sketch as the above contains some elements, at least, which may be considered disputable, and which will require further evidence for their support. It is really a considerable step beyond the position reached by Schmiedel, and, moreover, it is so far purely hypothetical, inasmuch as it goes somewhat arbitrarily beyond the *data* laid down by the latter scholar.

The question, therefore, arises: Can we by any possible means, by any historical and scientific process applied to our present Synoptic Gospels, extract such a 'Primitive' Gospel as the basis immediately underlying the three Synoptic records, and, therefore, standing perhaps midway between these, and (let us say) the nine 'Foundation pillars' of Professor Schmiedel? If we can do so, then the great problem, so far as it is historical, is solved, and we will be able to construct a simple biography of Jesus which will satisfy the *Canons* which are now laid down by all modern historians.[2]

[1] *Ency. Bibl.*, art. 'Old Christian Literature,' § 6.

[2] Professor Burkitt prefers *Mark* itself to all other sources (the so-called *Logia* included) as a guide to the actual Life of Jesus.

Now, it so happens that such an attempt has quite recently been made by Professor Flinders Petrie in *The Growth of the Gospels* (1910).[1] Stated briefly, his method is as follows: He removes from each Synoptic Gospel every episode which does not occur *in the same order* in both of the other Gospels. "Everything," he says (p. 14), "that is not in common to all three, in a parallel text, should be set aside. Thus there remains a body of episodes which are identical in order in all three Gospels. This must be the *Nucleus*, or common basis, on which each Gospel has been built."

Of course, this primary Gospel, or Nucleus, "very probably grew out of smaller documents," and it forms merely the stage where the primary compilation "passed *as a whole*, in unvaried order, into different lines of growth leading to several Gospels."

This 'Nucleus,' therefore, Professor Petrie believes, represents, as nearly as possible, "the Narrative used in the Church at Jerusalem, probably before 40 A.D., certainly before 50 A.D.,

He thinks that Mark's account is free from any ruling theological bias, and that the Evangelist did not employ any earlier written 'sources' (*The Earliest Sources for the Life of Jesus*, 1910). Wrede and others dissent from this view.

[1] One especial merit of Professor Petrie's method is, that he gets rid entirely of the *subjective* element in the analysis, and it stands apart from all questions as to the priority of each Synoptic. The work itself should be consulted for details, which cannot be given here.

upon which the Evangelists, later on, built the Gospels as we now have them," by the further incorporation of matter derived partly, perhaps, from oral, but more particularly from documentary sources.[1]

But this primary, or Apostolic, Gospel was not yet so named. The word 'Gospel' (εὐαγγέλιον), as Professor Petrie points out, never appears in this Nucleus. The earliest use of that term dates, perhaps, from 53 A.D. "The new teaching," adds Professor Petrie, "was called 'The Way'; or, if a fuller title was given to it, perhaps, 'The Teaching of the Way for Such as should be Saved.'"[2]

Now what do we find in this Apostolic Gospel (as we may term it) in its primitive and most historic, or narrative, form? We find it begins with the Mission of the Baptist; the meeting of Jesus and John is next recorded; then the retirement of the former into the desert; the reappearance of Jesus in Galilee, with His call to repentance, because 'the kingdom of heaven was at hand.' Next, we have the summons of Peter and James and John to follow Him; the healing

[1] Recent archæological research has shown that the art of writing was practised freely by even the humblest classes of that time, and there was certainly one professional scribe (Matthew) amongst the Twelve. It is, therefore, more than probable that a kind of diary of the journeyings would be kept, and notes taken (*Logia*) of the teaching of Jesus.

[2] Acts ii. 47, ix. 2, xvi. 17, xviii. 26, xix. 9, 23, xxiv. 14 (not '*that* way,' as in E.V.).

of the sick and 'possessed'; the call of Levi; the collision with the Pharisees on questions connected with the Jewish law; the teaching of the Galilean crowds by the lake-shore; the great Parable of the Sower spoken by Jesus; the report of His fame carried to Herod the tetrarch; the Feeding of the Five Thousand;[1] the acknowledgment of Jesus as the expected Messiah by Peter; the prediction by Jesus of His approaching sufferings, death and resurrection; His doctrine of self-denial as *the* test of discipleship; the Transfiguration;[1] the supreme significance of the child-spirit in spiritual matters; the 'Counsel of Perfection'; the second prediction of His sufferings and death; the entry into Jerusalem; the expulsion of the traders from the Temple; the Parable of the Husbandman; the trap set for Jesus by the Herodians, Pharisees, and Sadducees; His prediction of the destruction of the Temple, and the signs of the end; the betrayal by Judas after the eating of the Passover with the disciples; the scene in the garden; the trials before the Sanhedrin and Pilate; the Crucifixion; the burial and resurrection,—though the *post-mortem* Appearances do not seem to have been included in this 'earliest Gospel.'[2]

[1] The alleged 'miraculous' character of these episodes may be left out of account here.

[2] This, however, may possibly be due to the loss of the end of Mark, which seems to have recorded an Appearance.

Now, we evidently have here what we may term a very full, as well as primitive Gospel. And if it may be taken, as Professor Petrie avers it may, as *written* testimony, in existence, perhaps, within *ten*, or even *twenty* years, after the death of Jesus, we have in it indisputable material for a scientific Life of Jesus. There is no trace of *Myth*[1] in this document. Even *Legend* is largely precluded, because, *inter alia*, the cures spoken of can, if need be, be paralleled by well-attested modern 'psychical' therapeutic phenomena. And the definite assignment of the trial and crucifixion of Jesus to the procuratorship of Pontius Pilate and the high priesthood of Annas and Caiaphas, would have enabled both the Jewish and Roman Authorities, for many years afterwards, promptly and publicly to contradict the

[1] Exception may here be taken, that all references to a 'resurrection' are mythical. But surely such an event is mainly a matter of *comparison* (with the pagan myths), and sufficient *attestation*. The 'resurrections' of Adonis, or Osiris, etc., contain quite different elements, as we will show hereafter. And what attestation have any of these stories, and who saw these gods afterwards? The Resurrection of Jesus, on the other hand, St. Paul says, was attested by over 500 persons, many of whom were alive and known to him. It was, in fact, this 'difficulty,' which led Schmiedel to formulate his famous Subjective Hallucination theory (see present writer's *The Resurrection Narratives and Modern Criticism*, 1910). The only other alternatives seem to be that the disciples were either liars or lunatics. The former, however, is disproved by the fact that they went in peril of their lives, the latter is rendered most improbable by the sobriety of their conduct. But we will waive this point here, as our chief concern is with the mere historic existence of Jesus.

crucial statement. This, however, as we will see later, they never did, either during the years immediately subsequent to the death of Jesus, or during the two centuries following that event. They frequently endeavour, we find, to *discredit* Jesus, to controvert His teaching, but *never* to deny His life and death.

Again, this primary document, or Nucleus of the future Gospels, was not long afterwards supplemented by another document[1] of a different nature, which contained the chief 'Sayings' of Jesus, and which is now mostly represented by that great block of teaching comprising Matt. v. 1–vii. 29, the so-called 'Sermon on the Mount.' This large group of 'Sayings' (perhaps incorporated almost in its entirety by the author of Matthew) was evidently based upon actual notes taken of the various discourses of Jesus, and was to some extent used by Luke, and, perhaps, Mark. This would place its date, at the latest, earlier than the composition of Mark's Gospel (60–70 A.D.).[2]

Concerning this collection of Sayings, Professor Flinders Petrie says (p. 25): "The character of the Sermon is remarkable for the absence of the detail of all time and place in it, for the entirely

[1] Now generally designated 'Q.' It contained some Narrative, in addition to the 'Sayings.'

[2] Mark is here assumed to be the first gospel of the three Synoptics, though it makes no difference to our argument if Matthew be taken as the first, as a very few scholars still think.

ethical and fundamental character of it, and for the regular system and arrangement of it, as a whole.[1] It obviously belongs to the time when the relation of the new teaching to the old was the first question to the hearers, and when all the local and personal facts were familiar, and did not need any mention or allusion. It has every appearance of an *encheiridion* compiled during the ministry, or immediately afterwards."

We have now to deal with what Professor Petrie terms "The Historic Position of the Nucleus" (p. 38 f.). "When we search through it," he says, . . . "there is not a single idea or incident recorded which steps beyond the field of thought of the ministry, and of the Church at Jerusalem in its earlier growth."

Again: "When the geographical position is regarded, the result is still more trenchant. Galilee is only vaguely named, without indicating a single locality. There is but one precise statement of any place north of Jerusalem and Jericho. That exception is Cæsarea (Matt. xvi. 13), and that exactly localized account was due to Philip the Evangelist of Cæsarea (Acts xxi. 3), who was at Jerusalem by 30 A.D. (Acts vi. 5).

"Another strong evidence of the early date

[1] It would seem that this 'Sermon' received the accretion of two *Narratives* (Matt. viii. 5–13, and x. 2–24), before it was used by the Evangelists.

of the Nucleus is its treatment of the Resurrection period. It is full of minute detail, down to the burial, but only three or four verses at the utmost can be in the common basis of the Gospels regarding the Resurrection. Yet the Resurrection was preached at a very early date, and were the Nucleus even ten years later, there would have been a full record about it. The close of the Nucleus suggests a document drawn up within a few months of the final events."

Finally, Professor Petrie summarizes as follows: "The Nucleus was compiled probably in Jerusalem before any Galilean documents were publicly recognized there. All the classes of later additions have Galilean detail. . . .

"Taking historical facts into account, we see the changes of standpoint and of interests in each decade of the Early Church. The subjects dealt with in the Gospels are mostly those of importance before 40 A.D., while but little refers to the Diaspora [Dispersion] and the Gentile stages of 50 and 60 A.D. . . .

"The relation of the [Synoptic] Gospels which is seen to be most likely, is that Mark and Luke collaborated on additions to the Nucleus, when in Jerusalem in 54–56. After the first third, Luke left with his material, which he had personally collected in Galilee, and finished his Gospel elsewhere. Mark then obtained Matthew's Gospel, so far as then accreted, and finished his

Gospel, which remained in Egypt isolated from further accretion."[1]

Now we have above, the present writer ventures to think, a very simple and consistent, as well as probable theory of the origins and development of the Synoptic Gospels. The question, however, from our immediate standpoint, is, what is its *historic value* as a witness to the historicity of Jesus?

In the Primitive document, or Nucleus, as evolved by this hypothesis, we have a very natural and life-like story, in which (omitting for the present the brief notice of the Resurrection) there is not a single item which raises the slightest suspicion or distrust. A new Teacher comes forth from out of the obscurity of His early life —as so often happens in Eastern countries— and delivers Himself of His message. His wonderful personal and 'magnetic' influence (a faculty found in all great teachers) wins attention from the people, and even rouses the sick and 'possessed' to a higher degree of bodily and spiritual health, so that they quickly return to a normal condition of body and mind. This, again, may, if necessary, be to some extent paralleled in the history of modern 'psychic' phenomena. And then, as we might expect, this great Man meets with opposition from the 'vested interests' of the official priesthood of the day, who watch

[1] *The Growth of the Gospels*, pp. 53, 54.

His progress with jealousy and suspicion. And the result is, as history has shown over and over again to be the case, His persecution, and, finally, His death at their hands.

The whole story is told with a *naïveté* and charm which stamps it as both a natural and a truthful story of *historic* events.

And, if this be so, why should not this account rank as an historic document? In secular history no doubts whatever would be raised as to the actual truth of such a narrative; and, indeed, there are hundreds of stories, with less attestation than this record has, which are accepted without demur by historians of the highest authority. If the story dealt merely with the career of some figure, conspicuous, or inconspicuous, in the daily secular life of the past, it certainly would not be set down as mythical, or put aside as legendary, and a worthless testimony to the actual existence of such a person as it describes. Whatever value we may attach to the additions, which were subsequently made, from other sources, to this story, culminating finally in our present triple Synoptic record, is of no moment in the consideration of this primitive document. Moreover, in the matter of the qualities above referred to, it stands out clear and conspicuous from all the other contemporary literature of the first century A.D., and also the centuries which immediately preceded and followed it. In a word, in its character it is

absolutely and perfectly unique, a fact which, in itself, suggests very strongly that it has no common value. Its evidence, therefore, must possess the weight which attaches to all evidence of this kind; and, indeed, in its simpler form at least, the story fulfils all the conditions which are laid down as necessary by the modern scientific historian.

Finally, we have to consider briefly the historical value which attaches to the collection of *Logia* found in Matthew, which form now the greater part of the Sermon on the Mount. The question here is simply, do these *Sayings*—as representing a kind of summary of the higher ethical and spiritual teaching of Jesus—afford any evidence for the existence of a *single historical personality*? Or, do they indicate the wisdom of many,—are they merely an aggregation of sayings and maxims uttered at different times by different persons, and collected, perhaps, by the compiler of 'Q,' or the editors of Matthew and Luke from various sources? This is a very important question; it is necessary, therefore, to give it a most careful and unbiased consideration.

Now, at the outset, we may remark that this 'Sermon' has always greatly impressed the majority of thoughtful men with the *unity*, as well as the great spirituality and profundity, of its teaching, thus clearly suggesting an origin in a *single* mind remarkable for its transcendent powers and discernment.

Of recent years, however, a different tendency has sometimes arisen in certain quarters. It has become, for example, the practice with writers of the mythological school both to doubt the *originality* of the teaching contained in it—and the Gospels generally—and to disparage its *ethical* and *spiritual* value. Thus, Mr. J. M. Robertson, who may, perhaps, be taken as a fair representative of this school of thought in its extreme form, says: "Careful comparative study resolves such discourses as the Sermon on the Mount into compilations of the gnomic sayings of many teachers."[1] And, anticipating such a reply as, that the borrowing (if any) was all the other way, he adds: "The Talmudic parallels to any part of the Sermon on the Mount cannot conceivably have been borrowed by the Rabbis . . .; they would as soon have borrowed from the ritual of the Pagans."[2]

We are not quite so sure about this latter point, as Mr. Robertson appears to be, and personally are of opinion that the Rabbis, like many other people, were not always quite so scrupulous in such matters. Waiving this point, however, as immaterial here, let us see more particularly in what respect the originator (or originators) of the Sermon on the Mount is (are) alleged to be indebted to these Rabbis, whether in Talmud, or in Midrashim.

Mr. Robertson, in his work just quoted, gives a

[1] *Christianity and Mythology*, p. 307. [2] *Ibid.* p. 450.

detailed list of 'parallel' sayings from the works of the Rabbis, which is too long for quotation here,[1] and from which, by a series of plagiarisms, he believes the 'Sermon' was constructed.

But many of these so-called 'parallels,' which he gives, are certainly far-fetched, and but little resemble their supposed copies, not to mention the fact that, in point of expression, they are generally very inferior to their Christian 'imitations.' Moreover, the pre-Christian antiquity of some is, to say the least, doubtful; and, again, the question of other parallels in pagan teaching has sometimes to be considered. The same *ideas*, as a matter of fact, frequently spring up quite independently in different countries, at different times, and among different peoples.

But, even granting, for argument's sake (though we do not admit it to be a fact), that Jesus did borrow[2] frequently from the teaching of previous, or contemporary Rabbis (or even from heathen writers, which is still more improbable, as there is no reason for supposing that He was acquainted with pagan literature), there is still another fact to be considered. This is so clearly set forth by the learned and candid Jewish scholar, Mr. C. G. Montefiori, that we cannot state it better than in his own words. "To each individual striking utterance of Jesus," he says, "it is likely enough

[1] The reader is referred to his book for details.

[2] The theory of *borrowing*, either way, has been greatly overdone.

that a good parallel can be found in Rabbinic literature; but when Jewish scholars adopt this method of disproving the originality of the Gospel, they forget (quite apart from questions of date) the size of the Talmud and Midrashim. The teaching of Jesus is contained in three small books, which do not fill more than sixty-eight double-column pages of tolerably small print. The teaching belongs, or is attributed, to one man, and constitutes in large measure a consistent and harmonious whole. It is not a combination of a thousand different occasional and disconnected sayings of a hundred different Rabbis. . . . We have not to neglect a vast quantity of third- and fourth-rate material, and seek for occasional pearls amid a mass of negligent trivialities. And, lastly, we must take into consideration . . . not only what Jesus said, but *how* he said it. The beauty, the distinction, in a word, the genius of the form, must surely be taken into account, as well as the excellence of the matter."[1]

This is all profoundly true; and it is an absolute vindication, from the non-Christian point of view too, of the entire originality and profundity of the teaching of Jesus. To it we may also add the fact that, even to pick out and co-ordinate and systematize what is really valuable from a large mass of indifferent stuff, which is commonly the main characteristic of the work of pedants and

[1] *The Religious Teaching of Jesus*, pp. 110–111.

dullards, demands a capacity of no ordinary kind, and is quite beyond the powers of the mere compiler. The fact is, that no hypothesis but that of a single, supernormal, spiritual genius can explain the origin of the teaching contained, not merely in the 'Sermon,' but also throughout the Gospels. This teaching can only proceed from some *individual* Man, possessing in the highest degree the divine gift of *spirituality* and *personality*, such as has never been manifested by any other great religious teacher—not even the Buddha himself—with whom the world has been acquainted. It may please Mr. Robertson to describe the teaching of the Gospels as 'a literary patchwork,' and to sneer at the 'moderate ethical height' of the parable of the Good Samaritan; or, again, Mr. Blatchford may delight to inform his readers that the 'Sermon' is merely a new arrangement of old texts, taken out of the Old Testament; but these statements are mere assertions, and, moreover, untrue. And, indeed, Dr. Estlin Carpenter has invited (we believe in vain!) Mr. Robertson to produce an equal to this same parable out of the whole range of Greek literature, which undoubtedly contains the choicest teaching of the ancient world.[1] And the same test may also be

[1] In like manner the Hebrew and Jewish parables, generally, will not bear comparison with those of Jesus. Fiebig indeed asserts (*Altjüdische Gleichnisse und die Gleichnisse Jesu*, 1904, p. 105) that there are no parables in the whole range of Jewish

applied to the Sermon itself. We would like to see any extract from, or portion of, Jewish, or other, literature, which can compare for a moment, in point of merit, spiritual, ethical, or literary, with this discourse. It is, in truth, like the Synoptic Gospels themselves, a gem found in, for the most part, a literary wilderness of human pedantry and mediocrity; even the choicest passages of the Hebrew prophets are but pale reflections of divine truths in comparison with it. Herein we have displayed both the *individuality* and the *greatness* of Jesus; in this discourse a standpoint is reached which no mere compiler, or compilers, could attain, and which no mere 'literary patchwork' could ever show.

We will, therefore, conclude this chapter with a passage which shows that this is the conclusion also reached by one of the most eminent and fearless, as well as independent, of modern critical scholars. "Jesus," he says, "reveals to us by His teaching the true and ultimate Will of God. In His heroic stature and absolute self-devotion, in His exclusive insistence upon the highest and best and His scorning of anything less, He stands, perhaps, at an unattainable distance from us, and even shows an unbending sternness, nay, an awfulness, before which we shrink."[1]

literature relating to the kingdom of heaven. Neither are the Buddhist parables comparable.

[1] Wilhelm Bousset, *Jesus*, p. 157.

This, again, is very true; but not quite the whole truth. It may be added that, with all this, He shows also a tenderness and a *divine pity* for the weakness, and the frailty, and the ignorance of man, such as are also unique in the experience of the human race. The advocates of an unhistorical Jesus may, indeed, also be invited to produce any mythical parallel to His lofty, but withal meek and benign Figure. If they cannot do this, then the thesis of an *historical* Jesus is as good as proved.

CHAPTER III.

ST. PAUL AND THE HISTORIC JESUS.

We now turn to another division of canonical literature, which comes next in point of chronological order, and importance, to that which we have just been considering, and constitutes a record of an important part of the life and teaching of St. Paul. And here, too, we will confine ourselves strictly within the limits which are agreed upon by modern critical research.

We may, provisionally, assign the conversion of St. Paul to the year 35 A.D., and the Notes and Letters with which we have here to deal will come within the period 51–63 A.D., and fall into two groups.

In the first place, we have what is generally known as the '*We*,' or '*Travel*' document[1] (Acts xvi. 10–xxviii. 16). This is, by common consent of modern scholars, in all probability, extracted, if not actually copied, from a kind of diary kept by one of the companions of St. Paul in his second and third missionary journeys.

[1] See Harnack, *Luke the Physician*, Eng. tr. pp. 26–120.

According to Acts xx. 4, the Apostle was accompanied by a number of associates, who are, for the most part, mentioned by name, and who joined him at Troas. It is, however, tolerably clear that none of those persons who are mentioned there was the author of this diary. Several others have been suggested as the probable author, *e.g.* Silas; but he seems not to have been continuously with St. Paul throughout the period, and, moreover, is not mentioned after chap. xviii. 5, hence, he, too, seems out of the question; Titus—who was with Paul at the Council of Jerusalem (Gal. ii. 1), and continued with him during a part, at least, of his stay at Ephesus, and also during his subsequent residence in Macedonia (2 Cor. ii. 13, vii. 6, viii. 16 f., 23, xii. 18). But the editor of the Acts entirely suppresses the name of Titus, a thing which he probably would not have done had the latter been the authority for this period.

Lastly, and probably the most likely suggestion of all, we are offered the alternative of Luke himself as the diarist. If he were the editor of the Acts also, as Harnack and several other liberal scholars now believe, it would only be natural for him to insert an abstract of the contents of his travel-diary into the work which he compiled, perhaps some thirty years afterwards.

It is, however, possibly none of these men who is the author of the diary, but some unknown

travelling companion whose name has not been recorded.

Now, it has frequently been asserted, and re-asserted, that St. Paul himself had no knowledge whatever of the *historical* Jesus. This statement, too, is largely founded upon the alleged authority of St. Paul himself, who says (*e.g.* 2 Cor. v. 16) that, "We henceforth know no man after the flesh; (and) even if we have known Christ after the flesh, yet we now know Him no more."[1] Hence, say certain critics, the *historical* Jesus is for St. Paul a mere concrete embodiment, created by his mind to clothe the abstract *idea* of a suffering Christ, or Messiah, which latter concept he derived chiefly from Jewish Messianism, but partly also from the surrounding nature-cults of the Adonis type. We will deal with this latter point presently, and, meanwhile, will merely say that there is no reason whatever for drawing any such conclusion from the data which are available.

It is quite true, on the other hand, that nowhere in his letters does he give a continuous, or detailed, account of the life and works of Jesus;[2] but he frankly admits that the mere historical Jesus is

[1] J. Weiss (*Paulus und Jesus*, 1909), however, thinks that St. Paul *had* previous personal acquaintance with Jesus before His death, as this passage shows indirectly.

[2] Mr. Edward Clodd has very aptly pointed out (*Jesus of Nazareth*, p. 70) that, in his Epistles, "Paul was addressing people supposed to be acquainted with traditions then current." Hence, it is very evident that there was no need to go into any mere biographical details at that time.

not for him, or even (in his view) for the Church, the chief centre of interest, as He has perhaps become for us who form this present generation. St. Paul is concerned chiefly with the deeper *effects* produced by that *Life*,—its *meaning* and *power*, as part of a spiritual and divine scheme for the redemption and elevation of mankind.

The Apostle, in fact, is very largely a *doctrinarian* by the natural bent of his mind, and not a historian, or even a biographer.

Furthermore, he no doubt assumed that the mere human biography of Jesus was of little spiritual value—a totally different view of the matter, it may be added, from the one which prevails nowadays.[1] Still, in any case, it is incorrect to say, or even to assume, that he wholly ignores the historic Jesus in his Epistles, as we will see presently. The latter, indeed, is something more than a mere hypothetical centre round which his doctrinal ideas gather and precipitate, as Professor Drews and others would have us believe. For, if we read carefully the narrative in the Acts,[2] which is based upon this diary of St. Paul's travels, we will find scattered here and there many *historic* references, direct as well as indirect, to an actual Jesus, of whom Paul knew

[1] It is probable, too, as we saw in the last chapter, that the primary Gospel, 'The Way' was in very general circulation in Christian communities at this time.

[2] The Acts, it may be remarked, is now regarded by many critical scholars as having a considerable amount of historic value.

much, even though he had, perhaps, never seen Him 'in the flesh.'

For example, at Thessalonica, the diarist records (xvii. 3) that after preaching the Christ, who was destined to suffer and rise again—so far, possibly, a mere abstraction, or even a mythical *idea*, from the point of view of the modern reader—he distinctly *identifies* Him with the Jesus of Galilean repute, with whom, and whose history, he plainly assumes that the Jews of that town are acquainted. As Thessalonica contained a great number of his former co-religionists, there is good reason to believe that the name of the great 'Apostate' and 'Sorcerer' would be well known in that city, and the general circumstances of His life and death quite familiar to the people. Otherwise his identification of the 'Christ' with the 'Jesus' would have made no impression whatever upon the audience—who were orthodox Jews.

At Corinth, in like manner, we find (xviii. 4, 5) that St. Paul insisted upon the identification of Jesus with the 'Christ' looked for by the Jews, and this, again, in direct opposition to the latter, who denied not the actual existence of Jesus, but only that Jesus was that Christ. And when Gallio, the proconsul of Achaia, was appealed to by the Jews to settle this important point, he very naturally declined to enter into such a controversy, and 'drave from the judgment seat' the Jews who wished to argue out the point there. Gallio,

we think, has earned a quite undeserved reputation for stolid indifference in religious matters.

The next point to be noticed is the impression of the fact of the identity of Jesus with Christ upon an Alexandrian Jew, named Apollos, at Ephesus (xviii. 24) by Aquila and Priscilla, also Hellenistic Jews, who themselves had been previously won over to that view (cp. xviii. 2) at Corinth. Apollos apparently knew only the earlier teaching of the Baptist regarding the 'Coming One,' whom the latter had, a generation ago, declared to be 'at hand.' John, according to the Synoptic writers, appears to have long been in doubt as to whether Jesus were actually that 'Coming One,' or not; possibly he was never fully convinced of the identity (cp. Matt. xi. 3).

A further historic reference to Jesus—merely indirect, it is true—occurs in St. Paul's famous speech from the steps of the 'Castle' in Jerusalem. The reference here to Jesus the Nazoræan as the expected Christ, even though it be merely indirect, is of the greatest evidential importance. For, St. Paul, who preached everywhere 'Christ crucified' in the person of Jesus the Nazoræan, repeats here his identification of the expected Jewish Messiah with the crucified Galilean of a previous generation. Now, if the crucifixion of Jesus had been a mere legend, or, still more, a mythical idea embodied in a pseudo-historical form, as we are now asked to believe, it is im-

possible that such a statement could have passed muster on such an occasion; it would have been at once challenged by the Jewish authorities in that city. These authorities would have flatly denied that there had been any such crucifixion under their auspices; 'no such event happened at the time you speak of,' would have been their reply; and 'no such man was ever found in Jerusalem.'

And St. Paul's subsequent clever artifice for escaping from the clutches of a wholly hostile Sanhedrin,—hostile, that is to say, to all identification of Jesus the Nazoræan with the Messiah, corroborates this view. All the members of that assembly denied this identification, and denied also that the executed Jesus had 'risen' from the dead. Consequently, the Apostle's only chance of escape was to put forward prominently the question of a *general* resurrection, by which means he could divide the council in his favour. His identification of the actually crucified Jesus with the suffering Christ is again repeated (xxvi. 9, 23) before Agrippa.

We gather, therefore, both directly and indirectly, from this travel-narrative, or diary, embodied in the present *Acts of the Apostles*, that there had been, some thirty years previously, an actual Man, who was commonly known, in Jerusalem and elsewhere, as Jesus the Nazoræan; that this Man, on account of His teaching, had

been put to death at the instigation of the priests in Jerusalem, and, moreover, that this same Man was, in the opinion of St. Paul and others, the Messiah who had been, and still was, expected by the Jews.

Let us now turn to the other documents, in which St. Paul sets forth not a mere doctrinal and *ideal* Christ, but this same Christ as identical with a concrete and historical Jesus, who had lived and died, as a Man amongst men, but a short time previously. We refer to his Epistles, or Letters, to the various Churches, of which *four*, out of our present collection, are regarded by a consensus of even advanced critics[1] (so also Professor Drews) as genuine. These are (with their approximate dates)—Galatians, 51–53 A.D., 1 and 2 Corinthians, 52–56, and Romans, 54–57. We will, therefore, examine these, and set down here the chief references therein to an *historic* Jesus.

In Gal. i. 1, St. Paul tells his readers that 'God raised him [*i.e.* Jesus] from the dead.' It is a common practice, we are aware, with

[1] The authenticity of these *four* is only denied by Van Manen and five or six other Dutch critics of the Leyden school. Jensen attempts to prove (*Hat der Jesus der Evangelien wircklich gelebt?* 1910) that the Pauline Letters (as also the Gospels) are mere imitations of the Babylonian myth of Gilgamesh, etc., and are consequently wholly untrustworthy as historic documents. The absurdity of this theory has been clearly shown by Professor B. W. Bacon. See his article in the *Hibbert Journal* (July 1911), pp. 735–739, and refs.

critics of the school of Professor Drews, to assert that this is a mere reference to the 'resurrection' of a solar hero, or a vegetation-spirit. But if we carefully compare it with St. Paul's references elsewhere to the same event, this statement can only naturally be referred to a current story of the resurrection of a Man named Jesus, which was alleged to have taken place *once only* some twenty, or more, years previously.

The story of the Resurrection of Jesus Christ (whether a fact or a non-fact) was, we repeat, an account of a *single* event occurring in a certain year, and, therefore, as such, widely different from the periodic (annual) and figurative 'resurrections' of the sun-god, or vegetation-spirit, predicated in the various contemporary nature-cults. It plainly refers to the familiar Jesus of Galilee, who had been, in the recollection of a large number of men still living, done to death in Jerusalem. This is a most important point to bear constantly in mind, if we would understand clearly the various references in St. Paul's Letters, which we are about to set down here for consideration.

Another allusion in Galatians will be found in iv. 4, where we read that 'God sent his Son, *made of a woman*'—a plain and unmistakable corroboration of the above view, and unquestionably a reference to an actual human birth and a human existence.

In the three remaining Letters, the references are both more plentiful and more explicit. Thus, in 1 Cor. ii. 2, he tells the Corinthians: 'I determined not to know (εἰδέναι) anything among you, except Jesus Christ, and him crucified.'[1] It will be noted here that he does not write *Jesus*, merely, and, therefore, it may be objected that the reference is, after all, merely to a *Mythic* Christ of the nature-cult order. But a consideration of, and a comparison with, other similar passages in these Epistles leaves, we think, no doubt whatever that this is not what St. Paul refers to here. A similar remark, too, applies to ver. 8 in the same chapter: 'They have crucified the Lord of glory.'

A perfectly clear identification, however, will be found in xi. 23, where, in describing the institution of the Lord's Supper, he says: 'The Lord Jesus, in the night that he was betrayed, took bread,' etc.—a very human and striking picture of the scene in the Upper Room at Jerusalem. There is no 'mythic Christ' here; neither does the reference fit in with the teachings and beliefs of any of the supposed pre-Christian 'Jesus-Cults,' as we will show in the proper place.

[1] It is not probable that εἰδέναι is used here in a *mystical* rather than an *historic* sense. Liddell and Scott give ἐγνωκέναι (*novisse*) to know by *intuition*; εἰδέναι (*scire*) to know by *reflection*. Knowledge of a *mystical* character is always γνῶσις.

Again, chap. xv. vers. 3–8 gives us a series of very clear and distinct references to the historic Jesus: "Christ (meaning Jesus)[1] *died* . . . was *buried* . . . *rose again* on the third day . . . was *seen* by Cephas . . . by the Twelve . . . by over 500 brethren at the same time . . . by James . . . by all the Apostles," etc.

The suffering gods of the nature-cults were, it is true, *said* to have died, and their devotees played at the comedy of their supposed rising again, at the beginning of each new year in the life of Nature; but no one of these people ever asserted, or even believed, that he actually *saw* them directly afterwards in actual *human* form. Moreover, as we have already said, the Christian Resurrection was a single act, *once* performed. The resurrection of Adonis, etc., was an *annual* affair, symbolizing the birth of each new year.

Again, in 2 Corinthians we have two brief references—(1) to 'the sufferings of Christ' (i. 5), and (2) to the fact that He 'was crucified in weakness.' These expressions, if they stood alone, without qualification, might, it is true, be pressed into a reference to the dying god of a nature-cult; standing, as they evidently do, in connection with a *human* Jesus, they cannot

[1] We often, nowadays also, speak of 'Christ,' when we should, strictly speaking, say 'Jesus'; 'Christ' is, of course, a *title*—not a *name*. We should say 'Jesus *the* Christ,' or '*the* Christ.' So, also, 'Gautama the Buddha,' or 'the Buddha.'

possibly have any such meaning here. But the Epistle most fruitful of all in allusions to a *human* Jesus is that addressed to the Romans.

In ver. 3 of chap. i. we are told that He was '*made* of the seed of David, according to the flesh,' *i.e.* was an *actual man*, and not a mere mythical personage, the supposed embodiment of an *idea*.

In ver. 4 He is further declared to be 'the Son of God by the resurrection from the dead,' *i.e.* endued also with a superhuman and divine power. In vi. 4 there is another reference to the death of Jesus Christ, with whom (ver. 6) 'our old man' [= former nature] is said to be 'crucified.' In ver. 9 of the same chapter, Christ, it is said, thus 'raised from the dead, *dieth no more*'—a strongly marked distinction (as we have noted) from the 'saviour-gods' of the orgiastic nature-cults, who died annually, often about the close of each year, and also rose again annually directly afterwards.

Again, in ix. 5, this same Christ is descended from Paul's 'kinsmen according to *the flesh*,' *i.e.* the Jews, from whom, so far as the flesh is concerned, Christ came: this descent implies a human parentage. And, lastly, in xiv. 9, he says, that 'Christ died and lived that He might be the Lord both of the dead and the living.'

Now what is the conclusion, *historically* considered, which we draw from these references

detailed above? It is, that there existed—some time previously to the date of these Letters—a Man of Jewish race, who was born into the world of a Jewish mother, and that this same Man underwent certain sufferings, was put to death by crucifixion, and thereafter was seen after death—an experience which was not to be repeated in His case.

A very brief and scanty biography, it may be remarked; and it is so. But it is sufficient for St. Paul's purpose here, and was also sufficient for those who remembered and knew the story. Furthermore, it is not intended as a biography; it is merely a series of incidental references, made as occasion demanded.

St. Paul, moreover, is not interested in mere biography, even the biography of Jesus Christ. But he is interested, and profoundly so, in the *meaning* of His life and death and resurrection, as elements in a divine scheme for the amelioration of mankind.

What that meaning is for him, St. Paul develops in his system of Christian doctrine. But with that we are not here concerned.

And now we come to another point which is of considerable importance, though only indirectly so, for our present purpose. It is sometimes asserted that St. Paul sets forth in his Letters quite a different Gospel from that which, according to the Synoptic writers, was delivered by Jesus

Christ. In other words, that St. Paul's Gospel is *doctrinal* and *transcendental* merely, whilst that of Jesus, in the Synoptics, is *ethical* and *practical.*

St. Paul, it is true, deduces certain conclusions from certain *data*—ethical and practical—which are given in the Gospels; or rather, let us say, the Gospel in its more primitive form, as we traced it in the last chapter. But he, also, along with these doctrinal deductions, reflects a very great deal of the ethical and other teaching of Jesus, which is found in that important group of *Logia* that so largely make up the 'Sermon on the Mount.'

Let us examine these four Epistles side by side with that document.[1]

Taking the former in their presumed chronological order, we have, in the first place, *the fundamental spiritual principle* of the whole of the New Testament laid down in Gal. v. 14: 'All the Law is fulfilled in one saying; thou shalt *love* thy neighbour as thyself.' This is, so far, an imperfect echo of that beautiful *Logion* of the

[1] Professor Drews completely ignores the net results of the recent 'Jesus *versus* Paul' controversy, which has shown that there is not the difference between their outlook and teaching which was supposed to exist a few years ago, *e.g.* by Brückner and Wrede; cp. Jülicher, *Paulus und Jesus* (1907), and J. Weiss, *Paulus und Jesus* (1909). Bavinck says (*Gereformeerde Dogmatick*, 1910) that: "The Christ of Paul and John is, in point of fact, none other than the Christ of the earliest community, and agrees in *all* His traits with the Son of Man, who is made known in the Synoptic Gospels."

Master, wherein He says (Matt. v. 43): "Ye have heard that it hath been said: thou shalt *love* thy neighbour and hate thine enemy. But *I* say unto you: *love* your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them that despitefully use you, and persecute you." St. Paul, however, adds the missing portion in Rom. xii. 14, 17: "Bless them which persecute you; bless and curse not," and, "Recompense to no man evil for evil." Saul of Tarsus had been trained in the school of 'them of old time'; Paul the Apostle had learnt the newer Law of Jesus Christ! In 1 Cor. iv. 5 St. Paul teaches: "*Judge nothing* before the time until the Lord comes." This also reflects exactly the mind of Jesus, who says (Matt. viii. 1): "*Judge not*, that ye be not judged"—a spiritual rule still much needed, and by none more than by professedly 'religious' people. Again, in 1 Cor. viii. 3, we read: "If any man love God, the same (man) is *known* by Him." Amongst the recorded sayings of Jesus there is none which is a verbal equivalent of this; but it matches exactly the teaching of the 'Sermon,' as recorded in Matt. vii. 21–23, where the Lord '*knows*' those who have lovingly done His will, while He tells those who have not: "I never *knew* you," etc.

St. Paul also teaches—alike with Jesus Christ—most clearly, the great spiritual value of a *true* humility of mind. Compare these two *dicta*:

"Mind not high things, but condescend to men of *low* estate" (Rom. xii. 16); and, "Blessed are the *meek*," etc. (Matt. v. 5), and kindred sayings.

In Rom. ii. 13, according to St. Paul, it is not the 'hearers,' but the '*doers*' of the higher Law who are justified before God. So, too, Our Lord says (Matt. vii. 21): "Not every one that *saith* unto me, 'Lord, Lord,' but he that *doeth* the will of my Father," etc.

Again, St. Paul declares (Rom. v. 3) that Christians '*glory in* tribulations,' etc., which is a literal fulfilment of the maxim of Jesus (Matt. v. 11, 12): "Blessed are ye when men shall revile . . . and persecute you," etc.: "*rejoice* and be exceeding glad," etc.

Once more, the plain impossibility of '*serving*' two masters, whose demands upon us are of an absolutely contrary nature, as laid down by Our Lord (Matt. vi. 24), is clearly echoed by St. Paul, who says: "Know ye not that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his *servants* ye are" —and, therefore, of course, no one else's.

The teaching of Jesus on divorce is, it must be confessed, somewhat weakened by St. Paul in Rom. vii. 3. The Apostle seems never to have been able to free himself completely from the innate and characteristic Oriental contempt for women, and to rise to the idea of a perfectly impartial law for both sexes. Still, we find elsewhere that he disapproved of divorces by husbands

on various pretexts, which is a great advance upon the teaching of the Jewish scribes of that day.

Furthermore, the great aim and object to which the whole Jewish Law tended is explained in exactly the same manner by Our Lord and St. Paul. The latter says: "Christ (*i.e.* Jesus) is the *end* of the Law for Righteousness" (Rom. x. 4), and the former begs the Jews not to think, "that I am come to destroy the Law," etc.: "I am come to *fulfil*" (Matt. v. 17); in both of which utterances we recognize the same truth, that the old Law, as imperfectly expressed in the Decalogue, is absorbed into the new Law, which is perfectly set forth in the two 'new commandments' which are given by Jesus to men.

Once more; let us take also Our Lord's definite teaching with regard to almsgiving. He taught (Matt. vi. 1): "Take heed that ye do not your alms *before men*," *i.e.* publicly and ostentatiously. St. Paul, in like manner, urges upon the Romans: "He that giveth, let him do it with *simplicity*" (Rom. xii. 8), *i.e.* without ostentation.

Now, the above brief analysis and summary has shown the close agreement of the teaching, ethical and spiritual, of St. Paul with that of Jesus, and it might be carried out much further did our space permit. Enough, however, has been said to show their almost exact correspondence on many points, wherein the teaching of Jesus differed widely from the current maxims of the Rabbis.

We may affirm, therefore, in opposition to much modern opinion to the contrary, that the spiritual energies of the Apostle were not wholly directed towards the establishment of doctrinal and eschatological theories, to the neglect of the higher and deeper spiritual truths. A really careful study of his writings shows, indeed, that the doctrinal is quite of secondary importance.[1]

But the really important question which confronts us here is this: From *what source* did the Apostle derive this highly developed spiritual and ethical teaching, which, like that of Jesus, was undoubtedly the highest which the world had ever heard, and which has served as the highest and truest expression of the mind of God for now nearly nineteen centuries, which have elapsed since that time? Surely not from a *mythical* Christ! Of what mythical 'saviour' of any of the numerous nature-cults are such laws and precepts recorded? Or, again, from what human being, or society of human beings, living at that time, or previously, could St. Paul have derived them? Certainly not the official Rabbis, as we have seen. The contemporary Essenes, and Therapeutæ, and other organizations similar to these (if any such existed), lived, no doubt, for the most part, excellent and exemplary lives. But they were, in reality, merely a kind of

[1] This is unmistakably shown by such passages as 1 Cor. viii. 1b, xiii. 2, 13.

monastic order, or an aggregate of eremites, shut up, as it were, within the narrow circle of their own needs and ideas, troubling little, if at all, about the world outside, in which, we cannot doubt, they had little interest and less hope.

At any rate, history does not record any effort on their part to better it. And that outside world itself was certainly quite unable, and, we might add, equally unwilling, to evolve (and still more so to act upon) any such body of spiritual laws and precepts as these that we have been examining. By the 'method of exhaustion' (to use a mathematical expression) there remains, therefore, only *one* source of this teaching—the *historical* Jesus.

It is very easy to assert, as writers like, *e.g.*, Kalthoff often do, that "Christianity should be regarded as a particular development of social life, and not as the work of a *personal* founder of a religion";[1] or, to declare off-hand with Mr. J. M. Robertson, that the Christian religion is merely an aggregation of solar and other myths;[2] but we wish to know *how* this exalted type of spiritual and ethical teaching could arise, either out of a society which was confessedly rotten to the core, or out of a series of myths, which, for the most part, merely pandered to the basest of the primary instincts of humanity?

The actual *answer* to this question has, so far,

[1] *The Rise of Christianity*, p. 3.

[2] *Christianity and Mythology* (*passim*). See chaps. ix.–xi.

not even been attempted by the respective supporters of these theories.

One more question only now remains to be dealt with in this chapter. It will no doubt be asked—if our solution of the above problem be the correct one—*how* and *when* did St. Paul acquire the knowledge of the historic Jesus and His teaching, which is displayed in the four Epistles which have been under consideration? Now, we cannot possibly conceive that either of these were acquired during that 'psychic storm' through which he passed near Damascus, when a new turn to his life was certainly given; or, even during such experiences as that ecstasy, wherein he was 'caught up into the third heaven.'[1] There can be little doubt that the religious value of these subconscious—or 'super-conscious,' as Professor P. Gardner prefers to call them[2]—states, has for many years past been greatly overlooked. Let the materialist say what he pleases, some of the highest truths and aspirations have, from time to time, come to mankind through these channels. How far St. Paul was uplifted spiritually during these states we do not know, and it would be fruitless to inquire. We need not, however, resort to any such hypothesis in order to explain

[1] 2 Cor. xii. 2. Lucian of Samosata refers to this incident in his *Philopatris*, chap. xii. The key to the understanding of such experiences as these is undoubtedly the fact that 'heaven' is a *state*, rather than a place, in the mundane sense of the term.

[2] See *Hibbert Journal* (April 1911).

his knowledge either of the main facts of the life of the historic Jesus, or his familiarity with such teaching as that contained in the Sermon on the Mount. Indeed, St. Paul himself, indirectly and incidentally, lets us into the secret of it—if secret it may be termed.

In Gal. i. 18, he tells us that, after his vision of Jesus,[1] he retired to Arabia for a while, and then after another visit to Damascus, when three years had elapsed, he went up to Jerusalem, where he abode for fifteen days in company with Peter and James. This visit would, of course, afford ample opportunity for acquiring (whether by way of oral conversation with the Apostles, or by a study of 'The Way' document, and an authoritative collection of the *Logia* of Jesus, a sufficient knowledge of both His life and the rudiments at least of His ethical and spiritual teaching. According to Gal. ii. 11, he again met Peter at Antioch on the occasion of the Apostolic Council there[2] regarding the dispute about circumcision and other matters.

In these places, therefore, and on these occasions we may rightly infer that St. Paul gained that knowledge of the historic Jesus, and of His teaching, which we find in his Epistles; for we cannot believe that so earnest and alert a convert, as St. Paul proved himself to be, would be remiss

[1] For similar experiences, cp. Jundt, *Rulwan Merswin*, p. 19, and the *Pensées Fragments et Lettres de Paschal* (1897), p. 269.

[2] Acts xv. 22–25.

in seizing such favourable opportunities as these for acquiring knowledge.

Furthermore, these visits to, and conferences with, his brother Apostles alone preclude our taking St. Paul's references to the life and death and teaching of Jesus in any mythical, or merely *ideal*, sense.[1] He must have learned, both at Jerusalem and Antioch, at first-hand, from one of the three innermost disciples of Jesus, as also from James, 'the Lord's brother,' the facts relating to the earthly career of Jesus.[2] Had such intercourse never taken place, we might well have been at a loss to conceive from what sources his knowledge was obtained; and it would always have been possible, in such a case, to suspect that the historic allusions at least had reference to a mere ideal and unhistoric personage, though even then we should have been hard put to it to derive St. Paul's *teaching* from such a source.

His purely historical, or biographical, interest in Jesus was, however, never aroused to any great extent. Perhaps he thought the narrative of 'The Way' was quite sufficient; more probably, perhaps, his mind was cast in a different mould. The ethical, and spiritual, teaching of Jesus, on

[1] "There is no trace of any mythological basis," von Soden, *Has Jesus Lived?* p. 21.

[2] For the complete failure of modern negative criticism to supply a reasonable historic explanation of the sources of the material in the Pauline Letters, see Johannes Weiss, *Jesus von Nazareth*, pp. 94 and 100.

the other hand, he readily absorbed, with the result that his statements of Christian doctrine are always subservient to the higher law of Love, which law, like his Master, he ever set forth as being, in every sense, the fulfilment of the entire Law.

CHAPTER IV.

THE TESTIMONY OF JOSEPHUS.

Joseph ben Matthai, or—to give him the Roman name which he adopted in middle life — Flavius Josephus,[1] the celebrated Jewish historian, was born at Jerusalem in the first year of the reign of the Emperor Caius Cæsar (Caligula), 38 A.D. Both on the side of his father and his mother he was well connected: the former was a member of one of the chief priestly families in Jerusalem; the latter was descended from Jonathan, the first of the Hasmonean High Priests. He was carefully educated in all the learning of the time, both Jewish and Hellenistic, and he tells us that he made such good progress with his studies that, at the age of fourteen, he was frequently consulted by the priesthood on disputed, or difficult, points of Jewish law.

[1] Speaking of Josephus as an historian, the famous sixteenth-century scholar Scaliger declared that, not only in the affairs of the Jews, but even in those of foreign nations, he deserves more credit than all the Greek and Roman writers put together. There is no doubt whatever as to the wide information of Josephus, or as to his tact and discretion in using it.

At the age of sixteen he made a close study of the tenets of the various schools of philosophy of the time, and, in addition to this intellectual training, he underwent a course of mystical instruction under Banus, a celebrated Essene, with whom he remained for a period of three years. After that he returned to Jerusalem, where he definitely attached himself to the party of the Pharisees, at the early age of nineteen. His subsequent career does not directly concern us here. It will suffice, therefore, to say that after the Jewish war he retired to Rome, where he is believed to have lived on into the second century, busying himself with the various works of history and antiquities which bear his name.

We now proceed to state and discuss the evidence which is to be found, at the present day, in the works of Josephus; and it will be convenient to commence our examination with a transcript of the famous passage, directly referring to Jesus, which is found in the *Antiquities of the Jews*, XVIII. chap. iii. § 3 :—

"Now at this time there appeared a certain Jesus, a wise man [if, indeed, he may be called a man, for he was a worker of miracles, and a teacher of such men as received the truth with joy],[1] and he drew to himself many Jews [and many also of the Greeks. This was the Christ].

"Now when, at the instigation of our chief men,

[1] Brackets indicate supposed interpolations.

Pilate condemned him to the cross, those who had first loved him did not fall away. [For he appeared to them alive again, on the third day, according as the holy prophets had declared this, and countless other marvels of him.]

"To this day the sect of Christians, called after him, exists."[1]

The above narrative would, perhaps, at first glance appear conclusive enough: but many and grave objections have been taken to it, especially in its fuller form. Before discussing these, however, we will refer to Professor Drews' brief comment[2] upon it: "As for the testimony of Josephus in his *Antiquities*, which was written 93 A.D., the first passage (XVIII. iii. 3) is so evidently an after insertion of a later age that even Roman Catholic theologians do not venture to declare it authentic, though they always attempt, with pitiable *naïveté*, to support the credibility of pre-Christian documents of this type."

This criticism is both very sweeping and very

[1] Γίνεται δὲ κατὰ τοῦτον τὸν χρόνον Ἰησοῦς, σοφὸς ἀνήρ, εἴγε ἀνδρα αὐτὸν λέγειν χρή· ἦν γὰρ παραδόξων ἔργων ποιητής, διδάσκαλος ἡδονῇ τῶν ἀληθῆ δεχομένων. καὶ πολλοὺς μὲν Ἰουδαίους, πολλοὺς δὲ καὶ τοῦ Ἑλληνικοῦ ἐπηγάγετο. Ὁ Χριστὸς οὗτος ἦν. καὶ αὐτὸν ἐνδείξει τῶν πρώτων ἀνδρῶν παρ' ἡμῖν, σταυρῷ ἐπιτάσαντος Πιλάτου, οὐκ ἐπαύσαντο οἱ τὸ πρῶτον αὐτὸν ἀγαπήσαντες. ἐφάνη γὰρ αὐτοῖς τρίτην ἔχων ἡμέραν πάλιν ζῶν, τῶν θείων προφητῶν ταῦτά τε καὶ ἄλλα μυρία θαυμάσια περὶ αὐτοῦ εἰρηκότων. εἰς ἔτι νῦν τῶν Χριστιανῶν ἀπὸ τοῦδε ὠνομασμένων οὐκ ἀπέλιπε τὸ φῦλον.

Ἰησοῦς τοῦτος is the reading in Eusebius, *H.E.* I. 11, and, if the passage be genuine, probably the true one.

[2] *The Christ Myth*, 3rd ed. p. 230.

vague. We will therefore examine it in greater detail; when we find that (1) the passage was apparently unknown to Origen and the earlier Fathers who quoted from Josephus. These are uniformly silent about it. (2) Even its position in our present Greek text seems uncertain. The remarks of Eusebius about it also appear to show that in his time, it was found *before* Josephus' notices of Pilate, whereas now it is found *after* them.[1] (3) In its present position it very awkwardly breaks the narrative, and is followed directly by an utterly irrelevant account of a disgraceful trick played upon a Roman lady by the priests of Isis in Rome, in the reign of Tiberius.

Now, although the genuineness of the entire passage has been defended by a few scholars of note, viz. in the earlier part of the last century by Daubuz and F. H. Schoedel,[2] and one or two others and even recently by F. Bole,[3] it is very difficult to find any real support for it in the face of the objections above stated.

Furthermore, it is obvious that there are various statements contained in it which do not agree with what we know of Josephus from other sources. It seems unlikely, for example, that Josephus could have written such a phrase as, 'if,

[1] See Eusebius, *H.E.* i. 6.
[2] *Flavius Josephus de Jesu Christo testatus* (1840).
[3] *Flavius Josephus über Christus und die Christen* (1896).

indeed, he may be called a man'; or, again, 'This was the Christ'; or, once more, 'for he appeared to them alive again, on the third day.' Such expressions as these, added without any qualifying statements, would indicate that the writer was a Christian, either openly, or secretly, a thing which Josephus, whatever else he may have been, certainly was not.

Accordingly, some scholars have maintained that there was an original genuine passage which was subsequently interpolated by Christian scribes.[1]

This view has received the support of not a few modern scholars of repute, amongst whom we may mention G. A. Müller[2] and T. Reinach.[3] But it must be confessed that their position is somewhat doubtful; for such emendations as they propose do not seem to most critics wholly to remove the fundamental objections to its authenticity, though, at the same time, it is quite *possible* that Josephus may have penned it in some shorter form. At all events, the whole passage, whether in its full, or in any amended, form, is somewhat

[1] Not necessarily with dishonest motives, as is commonly assumed by antichristian writers. Many fussy scribes often added matter derived from other MSS., or what had been picked up in monastic and other gossip.

[2] *Christus bei Josephus Flavius* (1895), 2nd ed.

[3] *Rev. Etud. Juives*, xxxv. 1–18.

So Renan, who says: "I believe the passage respecting Jesus to be authentic. It is perfectly in the style of Josephus. . . . We feel only that a Christian hand has retouched the passage . . ." (*Life of Jesus*—Introduction).

unsatisfactory, and so tainted with suspicion that it is unsafe to rely upon it as credible evidence for any historic record by Josephus of the existence of Jesus.

But a very obvious and important question at once arises out of this fact. Assuming the actual existence of Jesus in the generation immediately preceding that of Josephus, how is it that an enlightened and careful historian, such as he shows himself to be, does not refer at some length to so important a matter as the career of Jesus Christ?[1]

The answer to this natural and apparently simple question must, of necessity, be somewhat complex.

In the first place, we must remember that—strange as it may appear to us—the Figure and Personality of Jesus Christ did not bulk anything like so largely in the world of Josephus as it does in the world of to-day.

Jesus was, no doubt, uniformly regarded by the Jewish world of that age as either a magician

[1] This question also arises in connection with *Philo Judæus*, of Alexandria, who, although a contemporary, never even distantly alludes to Jesus. But Philo was wholly wrapt up in his allegorical system of Judaism, and the Life and Teaching of Jesus could not be dragged into any such system of exegesis. Hence neither would interest Philo.

Another Jewish writer of this period, *Justus of Tiberius*, who wrote a brief chronicle of Jewish kings, also makes no mention of Him. But such a reference did not come within the scope of his work. And no other contemporary Jewish writings have survived.

or a half-crazy and wholly impossible enthusiast of mere peasant origin; and the religion which He founded was, for some time, a comparatively small and obscure sect, which was very imperfectly understood, and wholly despised, by the cultured writers and historians of the day. Indeed, at Rome, some eighty years afterwards, it was entirely misjudged, as the various notices of it in the works of Latin writers clearly show. Furthermore, both Jesus and His followers were probably just as complete a puzzle to Josephus himself.[1] From what we know of him, he appears to have been an enlightened and humane Pharisee, utterly devoid, it would seem, of the bitterness and narrowness which, we gather from the New Testament, were characteristic of that party in Our Lord's time.

Still, he was a Pharisee, and no doubt shared to some extent the intellectual and spiritual limitations of that sect. And to have given any detailed account of Jesus would almost have committed him to undertaking either a justifica-

[1] There seems to be a great difference of opinion amongst modern critics as to what the views of Josephus upon this subject really were. According to Ewald, Paret and Schaff, he looked upon Jesus as a sorcerer and seducer.

Renan and Weizsäcker, however, believe that he merely rejected His Messiahship. Again, Ewald thinks that he disapproved of the Crucifixion, while Paret believes that he approved of it. At all events, he doubtless took refuge in a comparative and discreet silence—the best course, perhaps, for a puzzled and undecided man.

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tion, or a condemnation, of the policy of the Pharisees of a former generation.

Again, when Josephus wrote his *Antiquities*, he was resident in Rome as a guest and friend of the Roman State. And, as we have before intimated, Christianity was distinctly an unfashionable sect in Rome,[1] and its Founder regarded as a mere obscure Jewish fanatic. And since Josephus was, above everything, a discreet and politic man, it was certainly better for him to avoid, as far as possible, such a subject where it was not very directly concerned with the general current of political history. Both Jesus and His followers would undoubtedly be regarded by the most tolerant of the educated Jews and Romans of that time as mere ignorant fanatics, about whom the less said the better. That Josephus, in particular, *could* have said much has been the opinion of the great majority of scholars. But since he was writing mainly for educated Greeks and Romans, who knew nothing and cared nothing about Jesus, who, politically speaking, played an insignificant part in the history of the period, he does not prominently obtrude the question. By adopting this line of action, he continued to hold, until the end of his life, the regard of his own countrymen also, and especially

[1] *e.g.* the Jews (and perhaps the Christians also) were believed in Rome to worship an ass-headed idol. Cp. Tacitus, *Hist.* v. 3; and (a hundred years later) Tertullian, *Ad Nationes*, xi.

that of the Pharisees, whom he was anxious to conciliate and reconcile to his Roman friends.[1]

There is, however, another direct but brief reference to the historic Jesus, and also references to two men who were closely connected with Him, which are made by Josephus because they come into the general current of historic events which he is relating. Thus in the *Antiquities*[2] we read :—

"Now, some of the Jews thought that the destruction of Herod's army[3] came from God, and that very justly, as a punishment for what he did against John, who was called the Baptist. For Herod slew him, who was a good man, and commanded the Jews to exercise virtue, both as to righteousness towards one another and piety towards God, and so to come to baptism ; for that the washing [with water] would be acceptable to him, not in order to the putting away of some sins [only], but for the purification of the body, supposing still that the soul was thoroughly purified beforehand by righteousness."

Now, we have here a very definite and credible reference to John the Baptist,—'a splendid and unassailable account,' Keim terms it,[4]—together

[1] For similar reasons, Josephus largely ignores the *Messianic* hopes of the Jews. These had then become distasteful to the more cultured classes, and were obnoxious to the Romans.

[2] XVIII. chap. v. § 2.

[3] By Aretas, King of Arabia.

[4] *Jesus of Nazareth*, vol. i. p. 16.

with a brief account of his mission, which is evidently viewed from a somewhat different standpoint to that of the writers of the Gospels. John, as here referred to, is certainly no mere *idea*, or mythical personage, as some modern critics would doubtless like to make him. The rest of the passage goes on to state that he attracted great crowds, who came to hear his discourses, which agrees in general with what the Evangelists tell us.

But at this point there is, again, a curious deviation from the Gospel version. Thus, in Mark vi. 17–27, we are told that John was arrested by Herod, probably at the instigation of Herodias, because he had denounced the incestuous union which the latter had contracted with Herod, and that, although Herod 'feared' John, and 'heard him gladly,' he executed him to please Herodias.

The account in Matt. xiv. 3–12 is very similar, except that we are not told that Herod feared John, or admired him; he feared the *people*; but he still acts at the instigation of Herodias.

Luke iii. 19, 20, gives a very condensed version of the story, but adds that John's reproof included the mention also of 'all the evils which Herod had done.' He likewise omits the account of John's execution, but refers to the mere fact later on (ix. 7–9).

Now Josephus gives a wholly different version of John's disagreement with Herod. Herod, he

says, feared the great influence which John had over the immense crowds who flocked to him; he feared that this influence might put it into the power of John to raise a rebellion against him—a contingency not wholly improbable in civilizations of that type. Accordingly, he was sent as a prisoner "out of Herod's suspicious temper to Machærus, the castle I before mentioned, and was there put to death." This description of the final scene in the main agrees with the narrative in the Gospels.

It is quite possible that Josephus' information —or recollections—with regard to Herod's real motive in executing John, may have been defective. He wrote long after Mark, in any case, and the statement of the latter may, after all, be nearer to the truth. It is also not unlikely that John's monition of Herod, respecting his union with his brother's wife, may have been, indeed probably was, privately delivered. It is certainly improbable that such a strong reproof would be administered openly before the Court. In either case, at any rate, Herod may have shut John up, because the latter might make this act, which he had condemned, an excuse for stirring up some revolt against him in the future. He 'feared' him for some reason, and therefore thought he had best be placed somewhere out of the way. And his subsequent violent and unjust death, we may well believe, was due to the caprice of a

spiteful woman, and Herod's absurd regard for the binding nature of a rash oath. We see, therefore, in spite of the differences in these separate versions, which probably arise largely out of the different points of view from which the question is regarded, a remarkable proof of the general historical veracity of the Synoptic writers.[1]

The second passage, which we have to quote in the same book,[2] contains not only a mention of Jesus, but also a direct reference to James, the 'brother' of Jesus. The earlier part of this section is devoted to explaining that Cæsar, after the death of Festus, sent Albinus into Judæa as proprætor, whilst the High Priest Joseph was deposed from his office, and that dignity conferred upon Ananus. This person, Josephus tells us, "was a bold man in his temper, and very insolent," and belonged to the sect of the Sadducees.

Ananus, therefore, seems to have thought that this proprætorial *interregnum* was a fitting opportunity for the exercise of a tyrannical and unlawful authority. "Festus was now dead," continues Josephus, "and Albinus was upon the road, so he assembled the Sanhedrin of the judges, and brought before them *the brother of Jesus who was called Christ, whose name was James*,[3] and some others. And when he had framed an ac-

[1] Cp. especially Mark vi. 14–29.

[2] XX. chap. ix. § 1.

[3] τὸν ἀδελφὸν Ἰησοῦ τοῦ λεγομένου Χριστοῦ, Ἰάκωβος ὄνομα αὐτῷ.

cusation against them, as breakers of the law, he delivered them over to be stoned. But as for those who seemed to be the just portion of the citizens, and such as were the most uneasy at this breach of the laws, they disliked what was done. And so they sent to the king, desiring him to send to Ananus [to command] that he should so act no more, for that which he had already done was not to be justified."

The remainder of this section relates how Albinus, on hearing of these proceedings, threatened Ananus with punishment, and that Agrippa subsequently took away the priestly office from him, after a tenure of only three months.

Although the death of James, 'the brother of the Lord,' is not mentioned in the New Testament, wherein he occupies for the most part an inconspicuous position, there can be little doubt that he died by the hands of the Jewish zealots, urged on, it would seem, by Ananus, somewhere about 63 A.D., as Josephus states. A very circumstantial account of his death is given by Hegesippus, a converted Jew (*circa* 160 A.D.), which is preserved by Eusebius.[1]

This passage, just quoted, has been questioned by some scholars, who have fancied that they detected signs of a Christian interpolation; but no sufficient arguments have been advanced against it. Turning to Professor Drews, we find

[1] *H.E.* ii. 23.

that he also adopts this view. "But the other passage, too," he says, "which states that James was executed under the authority of the priest Ananus (62 A.D.), and refers to him as 'the brother of Jesus, the so-called Christ,' in the opinion of eminent theologians, such as Credner (*Einl. ins. N.T.* p. 581, 1836), Schürer (*Gesch. d. jüd. Volkes*, i. p. 548), etc., must be regarded as a forgery." And he adds (in a footnote to this passage) that "Origen, though he collected all Josephus' assertions which could serve as support to the Christian religion, does not know the passage, but probably another [passage], in which the destruction of Jerusalem was represented as a punishment for James' execution, which is certainly a forgery.

"But," he continues further, "even if its authenticity were established, it would still prove nothing in favour of the historical Jesus; for, first, it leaves undecided whether a bodily relationship is indicated by the word 'brother,' or whether, as is much more likely, the reference is merely to a religious brotherhood. Secondly, the passage only asserts that there was a man of the name of Jesus, who was called Christ, and this is in no way extraordinary, in view of the fact that at the time of Josephus, and far into the second century, many gave themselves out as the expected Messiah."[1]

[1] *The Christ Myth*, 3rd ed. pp. 230–31.

Now, setting aside Professor Drews' primary objection that certain 'eminent theologians have had their doubts as to the genuineness of the passage—which is not a very valid argument, since equally, and even still more, eminent theologians and scholars might be quoted on the other side of the question—and turning to a more serious criticism, viz. that Origen does not seem to know of this passage, but probably '*another*' referring to James' execution, which is 'certainly a forgery,' it is somewhat difficult to see exactly what Professor Drews means here. Is it that there were *two* spurious passages, of which the present one is now the sole survivor? The mere fact, however, that Origen knew of *a* reference to the execution of James points to *this* passage —unless strong evidence for some other can be produced. But we have no such evidence.

Moreover, the mere assertion that either, or both, are forgeries does not prove them to be so; neither does the fact (*if* it be a fact) that the passage is not quoted by Origen necessarily have this meaning, for we do not know that he 'collected *all* Josephus' assertions'; he may have collected only what he thought pertinent and sufficient for his purpose.

Therefore, any omission on the part of Origen would be, at the most, mere *negative* evidence, which always requires some positive support, if it is to prove anything. There are, really, no valid

reasons of any kind for regarding the passage as a forgery. Keim remarks upon it: "There can exist scarcely any doubt concerning the authenticity of this passage, *which is quoted in full by Origen*; here is genuine Jewish history, without a trace of Christian embellishment, and the identity of person with the Christian James is established by the ancient but somewhat legendary notices of the death of the latter by Clement of Alexandria, and chiefly by the Christian Palestinian, Hegesippus. The designation of James as 'the brother of Jesus, the so-called Christ,' is also in itself unprejudicial; the Jewish author expresses —as Origen saw—not, indeed, *his own belief*, but the general notoriety of the name of Jesus Christ, as it must have prevailed about the year 70."[1]

There can, indeed, be little doubt that the reference to the destruction of Jerusalem as being a divine punishment of the Jews for the death of James[2] was in the nature of an expression of popular opinion, perhaps that of the then somewhat numerous Ebionite, or Nazoræan, sects of Christians who would not hesitate to form such a conclusion when the head of their party was thus summarily and unjustly executed. And Josephus

[1] *Jesus of Nazareth*, vol. i. pp. 16, 17. Italics ours.

[2] Origen remarks (*Contr. Cels.* i. 47) that Josephus *ought* to have said that the conspiracy against *Jesus* was the cause of these calamities befalling the people. But probably Josephus only quotes an opinion he had heard, not his own. Justin Martyr held the former view (cp. *Dial. c. Tryph.* 16).

would be much more likely to put on record some such expression of current popular opinion than to give his own personal views.

The further objection that, in any case, the passage 'proves nothing in favour of the historical Jesus' is equally irrelevant. Here there is not the slightest reason for supposing, as Professor Drews does, that 'brother' has any other meaning than that of blood relative.[1] Had it meant a member of the 'brotherhood' of Jesus[2] we would find the disciples of Jesus (whether the Twelve or the Seventy) invariably referred to in the Gospels as His 'brothers.' But this is just what we *never* do.[3] On the other hand, we do find references to certain 'brethren' of Jesus, whether children of Joseph and Mary, or children of Joseph by a former wife, as some Christians have supposed.

The natural inference from these facts, therefore, is, that Josephus here means 'James, the brother of the Lord,' who is mentioned in the Gospels as a member of Our Lord's family circle.

[1] Origen remarks (*Contr. Cels.* i. 47): "Paul . . . says that he regarded this James as a brother of the Lord, not so much on account of *their relationship by blood*, or of their being brought up together, as because of his virtue and doctrine." It seems to be uncertain from what source Origen derived this statement, but it certainly makes indirect reference to a *physical* relationship. And in Gal. i. 19 he is distinctly termed by St. Paul, 'James, the *brother* of the Lord,' in the natural sense of the term.

[2] *i.e.* a member of the 'Jesuist cult.' See Chap. VII.

[3] They are mentioned separately in 1 Cor. ix. 5.

Nor, again, will his criticism that the reference here made does not fix upon the Christian Jesus as the one referred to possess any real weight. For, in the first place, we have no evidence to show that any of the other Messianic claimants—whether before, or subsequently to Our Lord's time—were named *Jesus*.[1] Neither is it likely that, even if any one of them were so named, that he had a brother named James. In short, the simplest and most natural explanation of this passage is, that it refers directly to the Jesus of the Christian world, and to His brother James, who is mentioned both in the Gospels and Epistles as holding such a family relationship to Him.

[1] The real name of Bar Kocheba, for instance, was Simeon.

CHAPTER V.

THE TESTIMONY OF THE ROMAN WRITERS.

Cornelius Tacitus, the most famous of the historians of Imperial Rome, was born probably between 52 and 54 A.D., and died, perhaps, about the year 120.

Of his abilities and value as an historian[1] there can be little or no room for doubt, and his work in that department of Letters will always rank with that of the greatest historians, whether ancient or modern. That he did not always approach the consideration of the events which he recorded in a perfectly impartial spirit is evident from his treatment of the origins of Christianity; that he

[1] Determined attempts have been made in recent times to undervalue Tacitus as a careful and trustworthy writer. Cp. Bruno Bauer, *Christus und die Cæsaren, etc.* (1879), 2nd ed., and J. C. Tarver, *Tiberius the Tyrant*, 1902. The latter writer has maintained that his estimate of Tiberius, in particular, is a mere caricature. Tacitus, it may be allowed, was somewhat prejudiced by Roman aristocratic bias; but, in spite of that, he is reliable as an historian, and even his gloomy picture of the condition of Rome under the Emperors is amply confirmed by the evidence of other and contemporary writers.

was deliberately unfair cannot be maintained by any reasonable critic. Indeed, he himself earnestly claims that, in writing his histories, he was actuated by the loftiest motives. "I regard it," he says in a well-known passage,[1] "as the highest function of history to rescue merit from oblivion, and to hold up as a terror to base words and actions the reprobation of posterity."

The earliest notices of Jesus from pagan authors are found in the little group of contemporary writers of the time of Trajan (r. 98–117 A.D.)—Tacitus, Suetonius and Pliny. These notices are brief and largely incidental, being called forth by various exigencies of the social or political situation in Rome, or the provinces, to which the historian is referring; and, proceeding as they do from writers avowedly hostile to the nascent Christianity, are the more valuable on that account alone.

The first mention of the new 'sect' is by Tacitus, who, in describing the burning of Rome during the reign of Nero,—A.D. 64,—distinctly affirms that the fire was really initiated by the Emperor himself, but was imputed by him to the Christians, who had become, by that time, a somewhat numerous, if uninfluential, body in Rome.[2]

[1] *Annals*, iii. 65.

[2] Gibbon and a few other writers since his time have expressed great doubts as to whether the Christians really existed there in

In the eyes of Tacitus the nascent Christianity is merely 'a detestable superstition,' which has made its way to Rome from Judæa, 'the source of this evil.' He evidently considers it, from a superficial examination of its tenets—as indeed Roman writers did—a mere variety of Judaism, and thinks that it displays the same exclusiveness and contempt for all other cults, which was characteristic of that religion. Thus he declares that the Christians "have been convicted of a hatred of the human race."[1]

The passage in which Tacitus refers directly, but still only incidentally, to the Founder of Christianity, written about the year 115 A.D., is found in the *Annals*, xv. 44. He says there: "The author of this name [*i.e.* Christian], *Christus*, was executed in the reign of Tiberius by the procurator Pontius Pilate, and the detestable superstition, suppressed for a time, broke out again, and spread not only over Judæa, where the evil originated, but even through Rome, where everything upon earth that is vile, or shameless, finds its way, and is practised."[2]

such numbers as to attract imperial notice, and serve as a scapegoat for imperial crime. They were, however, undoubtedly numerous, chiefly amongst the humbler classes of citizens and slaves, and were found even amongst the servants of the Emperor himself.

[1] Odio humani generis convicti sunt. The Jews were also infected with an Adversus omnes hostile odium (*Hist.* v. 5).

[2] Auctor nominis eius, *Christus*, Tiberio imperitante, per procuratorem Pontium Pilatum, supplicio affectus erat; repressaque

Now this is—apparently, at least—a very clear and definite reference to the origin of Christianity, and to the historical existence of its Founder. The religion, he says, takes both its name and origin from a *personal* founder, one 'Christus,' who lived and taught in Judæa, and subsequently died there, during the procuratorship of Pontius Pilate, that is to say, between 26 and 36 A.D.

We may note here, before passing on to a critical examination of this passage, one or two preliminary points, which are worthy of remark.

And, first of all, we may notice that Tacitus appears to regard 'Christus' as a *personal name*—not, as it really is, a *title* merely.

This is, of course, a very natural mistake for an imperfectly informed pagan historian to make: other Roman writers also fell into the same error. The references to it as 'a detestable superstition,' and 'an evil,' are also just what we might expect from an ignorant, but self-satisfied, pagan writer. These expressions, therefore, are not *likely* to proceed from some dishonest or even honest but officious, Christian interpolator.

In spite, however, of these very obvious preliminary facts, the whole passage has been very seriously called in question, chiefly by writers who have a case to make out against Christianity.

[illegible] per Judæam, originem ejus mali, sed per Urbem etiam, quo cuncta undique atrocia aut pudenda confluunt celebranturque.

We will, therefore, commence with the objections to it recently put forward by Professor Drews: "Are we," he asks,[1] "so certain that the passage cited from Tacitus, as to the persecution of the Christians under Nero, is not, after all, a later insertion and falsification of the original text? This is, indeed, the case, judging from Hochart's splendid and exhaustive inquiry. In fact, everything points to the idea that 'the first persecution of the Christians,' which is previously mentioned by no writer, either Jewish or heathen, is nothing but the product of a Christian's imagination in the fifth century."

Again, he further continues (p. 232): "But let us admit the authenticity of Tacitus' assertion. . . . Tacitus can at most have heard that the Christians were followers of a Christ who was supposed to have been executed under Pontius Pilate. That was probably, even at that time [*i.e.* after 100 A.D.], in the Gospels, and need not, therefore, be a real fact of history.

And even if it has been proved, according to Mommsen, that Tacitus took his materials from the protocols of the Senate, and imperial archives, there has been, on the other hand, a most definite counter-assertion, that he never consulted these authorities."[2]

[1] *The Christ Myth*, 3rd ed. p. 231.

[2] Referring to *Handb. d. Klass*, *Altertumsw.*, viii. 2, Abt., Aft. 2, under 'Tacitus,' which says: "Consulting the Archives has been

We will now proceed to examine these, and other, objections.

The first, and incontestably the most serious, difficulty raised is the alleged lack of authenticity for this passage. Professor Drews would regard it as undoubtedly a later falsification of the text of the *Annals*—the product, he suggests, of the 'imagination' of *some Christian in the fifth century*!

In support of this view he merely quotes the authority of the French writer Hochart.[1] Now Hochart published in 1885 his *Études au Sujet de la Persécution des Chrétiens sous Néron*, in which he endeavoured to prove that this passage was spurious, and that the Neronic persecutions were unhistorical.

But no classical scholar or historian, of any repute, has accepted his arguments and conclusions!

Hochart, however, was not to be discouraged. In the year 1890 he went a long step further, and declared in a second and third book[2] that the last six books of the *Annals*, and the first five of the *Histories*, of Tacitus were entirely a forgery by

but little customary among ancient historians; and Tacitus has bestowed but little consideration on the *Acta Diurna*, and the Protocols of the Senate."

[1] von Soden says of Hochart (*Hat Jesus Gelebt?*): "He is quite unknown to us in Germany."

[2] *De l'Authenticité des Annals et des Histoires de Tacite* (1890), p. 320; and *Nouvelles Considérations au Sujet des Annales et des Histoires de Tacite* (1895), p. 293.

Poggio Bracciolini, an Italian scholar of the Renascence period.

Regarding this latter extreme view, Bishop Lightfoot—a liberal-minded prelate and profound scholar—prophesied: "It will go the way of Father Hardouin's theories, that Terence's plays, and Vergil's Æneid, and Horace's Odes, and I know not what beside, were monkish forgeries."[1]

Subsequent research seems likely to justify completely this forecast. For it has been found that various minute details and references in the *Annals* correspond accurately with the evidence furnished by coins and inscriptions discovered since Bracciolini's time. Furthermore, Rudolphus, a monk of a monastery at Fulda, in Hesse Cassel, who wrote in the ninth century, says that Tacitus speaks of the river Weser as the Visurgis. This name of the river, it will be found, occurs five times in our existing text of the *Annals*; hence it is clear that a MS. of this text must have existed in the ninth century, that is to say, *over four hundred years before Bracciolini's time*! To this may be added the fact that Jerome (340–420 A.D.) refers[2] to the lives of the Cæsars as a work written by Tacitus—no doubt the *Annals* in question.

[1] *Apostolic Fathers*, vol. i. p. 75 note. For a further treatment of this question see Introduction to vol. i. of Furneaux' edition of the *Annals of Tacitus* (Clarendon Press).

[2] *Ep.* vii. 33.

Again, there is indisputable pagan testimony for certain extensive persecutions under Nero, which, although the Christians are only once mentioned by name,[1] must in every instance refer to them, and thus confirms the statements made by Tacitus (*Annals*, xv. 4. 4).[2]

Finally, we have further important confirmation from no less than four early Christian writers, as von Soden has pointed out (*Has Jesus Lived?* p. 10). These are Clement of Rome (96 A.D.), Dionysius of Corinth (170 A.D.), Zephrynus, Caius, a presbyter of Rome (early third century), and Tertullian. The last-named writer is very clear in his testimony. He says (*Apol.* v.): "Consult your histories and you will find that Nero was the first who assailed with the imperial sword the Christian sect, then making progress, especially in Rome."

But to this evidence—in the case of Clement above referred to—Professor Drews takes exception. He says: "The authenticity of the author of Clement is . . . quite uncertain, and has been most actively combated, from its first publication in 1663 till the present day, by investigators of repute, such as Semler, Baur, Schwegler, Volkmar, Keim, etc." It suffices

[1] See p. 124, note 2.

[2] These are Suetonius (*Nero*, xvi.); Juvenal (*Sat.* i. 155 ff.); Martial (*Epigr.* x. 25). When these passages are compared, and it is borne in mind that there is no record of any *other* persecutions at that time, the conclusion is irresistible.

here to reply, that in the judgment of the vast majority of competent and unbiased scholars, the first Letter of Clement is an authentic production of the friend and fellow-worker of St. Paul.[1]

As regards Tertullian, in any case, his testimony is wholly undisputed, and its date (Mosheim 198 A.D.; Allix. 217 A.D.) precludes entirely the invention of a Neronian persecution by *the imagination of a fifth-century Christian*!

Amongst the various other, and minor, objections to this passage in the *Annals*, we may notice the following. It is alleged that Tacitus would never have penned the phrase, 'Tiberio *imperitante*,' but would have written, 'Tiberio *principe*.'

The ground for this objection is based upon the fact that the earlier Roman emperors were regarded merely as heads of the Republic, and, therefore, were styled 'principes.' When Tacitus wrote, however, the *imperial* view of this headship was in practice, if not in theory, already well established; he might, therefore, in his day, very naturally write of even the long-dead Tiberius (d. 37 A.D.) as 'imperitans.'[2] Moreover, the word thus used, in a somewhat

[1] Cp. Euseb. *H.E.* iii. 15, 16. In any case, it must be dated early in the second century.

[2] Hadrian (r. 117–138 A.D.), the successor of Trajan, seems to have been the first Emperor *openly* to assume the plenitude of imperial legislative power.

loose and popular sense, had long been current amongst writers of both the 'Golden' and 'Silver' ages of Latin literature.[1]

We have still to consider, in greater detail, the question of the *sources* of the information possessed by Tacitus upon this and other matters.

Professor Drews confidently declares that, in any case, this passage, if authentic, is at best founded upon mere hearsay report. Now, it is well-known that several sources of exact information existed at Rome in the time of Tacitus. The chief of these were the *Acta Senatus* (a record of the proceedings, etc., of that body) and the *Acta Diurna* (or *Acta Populi*) a kind of Daily Gazette, or Journal, which was regularly published in the city to chronicle current events of interest, or importance, which had occurred throughout the Empire. We have, of course, no reason to suppose that a report of the execution of Jesus would be likely to be discussed in the Senate, although He had been ostensibly convicted of setting Himself up as 'King of the Jews.' The beginnings of Christianity, and the mock charge against Jesus, were matters much too obscure and unimportant to merit such distinguished notice.[2] Still, it is just possible, if not

[1] *e.g.* Livy, Cicero, Sallust, Vergil, Horace, etc. Tacitus himself also uses it of the influence of Veleda (a German sibyl): Ea virgo nationis Bructeræ late *imperitabat* (*Hist.* iv. 61).

[2] There is, however, an old story—probably quite untrue—that

probable, that Pilate sent a report of the matter to Rome, after his strained relations with the priests, who hinted very plainly that his conduct showed a lukewarmness in the matter of duty to Cæsar. And if they made any formal complaint, a report would doubtless find its way into the State archives. Possibly, too, the Story of the Grim Tragedy itself may have been chronicled in the *Acta Diurna*. We do not know, and can only conjecture what *may* have happened. But if this were so, Tacitus, and perhaps the other Roman writers, may have derived their information indirectly, if not directly, from some such sources. Tacitus certainly seems too precise in his statement for mere hearsay information, the general worthlessness of which he must have well known. And, as we have already pointed out, the weighty opinion of Mommsen, that Tacitus *did* use contemporary records in writing his historical memoirs, cannot be set aside in any such off-hand manner as some writers would appear to think it may be.[1]

But there are yet other and positive reasons for receiving this passage. The general style and Latinity are, by the almost universal consent of scholars, those of Tacitus, whose

the Senate formally rejected a proposal of Tiberius to *deify* Jesus, and to place His bust upon the Capitol.

[1] Hochart's sneer at the historical scholarship of Germany (*Études, etc.*, p. 227) is quite undeserved, and unworthy of notice.

diction is characterized by many well-marked peculiarities. Besides, we are not acquainted with any Christian writer of the second century, or even later,[1] who could be pronounced capable of reproducing his Latin.

Moreover, we repeat, the notice is, in all respects, just what a Roman historian of strong aristocratic leanings would bestow upon a religion with so humble an origin as that of Christianity. But for the fact of the fire in Rome being imputed to Christian misanthropy by Nero, a charge which even Tacitus rejects, and the fact that the spread of the new religion, especially among the humbler classes of Rome, was fast becoming a nuisance to the old pagan element in the city, the historian would probably not have mentioned the Christians at all. The whole cult, indeed, was to him plebeian and vulgar, and of no importance whatever, except in so far as it might be connected with other and momentous historic facts. Such an outlook as this, again, would not have been that of a Christian interpolator.

In short, we may sum up our examination of this document by saying that we see no valid, or even satisfactory, evidence whatever for rejecting the passage, as not being the work of Tacitus; or for regarding it as founded upon mere hearsay, which Tacitus was not at sufficient

[1] *i.e.* until we come to the period of the Revival of Learning.

pains to verify before inserting it in his narrative.

The *balance* of the evidence points decisively to the entire genuineness of the statement.

We turn now to a contemporary of Tacitus. Caius Suetonius Tranquillus (born about 70 A.D.) began public life as an advocate at Rome. Subsequently, he became a private secretary to the Emperor Hadrian, in whose service he must have had access to many important private and State documents. Like Tacitus, he also had many opportunities of conversing with well-informed men who had lived in the reigns of Caius (Caligula), Claudius and Nero.

In his *Life of Claudius* he refers (chap. xvi.) to a '*Chrestus*,' whom he seems to regard as a restless and seditious Jewish agitator, still living *in Rome* in the reign of Claudius, and who had been the cause of tumults in that city.[1]

Again, in his *Life of Nero* (chap. xvi.), he further says: "The Christians, a set of men of a new and mischievous superstition, were punished,"[2] which confirms the similar statement made by Tacitus.

[1] Impulsore *Chresto* assidue tumultuantes. A hundred years later Tertullian had still to refer to 'Chrestus' and 'Chrestiani' as 'a faulty pronunciation' of the words, in use chiefly amongst the heathen (*Ad Nationes*, iii.). Cp. also Lactantius (*Institutes*, iv. 7), a century later still.

[2] Affecti suppliciis Christiani, genus hominum superstitionis novæ et maleficæ.

The authenticity of this passage, which presents several features in common with the one cited from Tacitus, is undisputed, even by Professor Drews. He remarks, however, concerning the reference contained in the *Life of Claudius*: "Let us suppose . . . that by Suetonius' Chrestus is really meant Christ, and not a popular Jewish rioter of that name; let us suppose that the unrest of the Jews was not connected with the expectation of the Messiah, or that the Roman historian, in his ignorance of Jewish dreams of the future, did not imagine a leader of the name of 'Chrestus.' Can writers of the second century after Christ, at which time the tradition was already formed, and Christianity had made its appearance in history as a power, be regarded as independent authorities for facts which are supposed to have taken place long before the birth of the tradition?"[1]

This paragraph, just quoted, propounds a plain and simple question, but one which nevertheless involves a complex answer. We reply briefly, however, that Suetonius—and Tacitus also—are not taken as primary and independent authorities for the *fact* of the existence of Jesus, but as testifying, in a secondary sense, to the *record* of that fact in general and well-informed public opinion. What their testimony—if authentic—really shows is, that the *main fact* was in their

[1] *The Christ Myth*, 3rd ed. p. 232.

day, and had been for a long time previously, in the memory of living men, a matter of common knowledge.[1]

And, indeed, we have here—as previously in the case of Tacitus—the same kind of indirect proofs as to the value of the statement; we have the lofty contempt of the Roman bureaucrat, as shown in the ignorance of the personal name of Christ, and even (in the case of Suetonius) of the correct spelling of His Messianic title, together with a complete misunderstanding of His character and mission, which at that time was almost universal in pagan Rome, and considered no disgrace even in an educated Roman. That Suetonius does refer here to Jesus there can be no doubt. Had he been thinking of one of the many ordinary Jewish rioters of the time, he would certainly have written 'Chresto quodam.'

'Chresto' simply, practically identifies it with *the* Christ, *i.e.* Jesus. Moreover, we have no evidence to show that any Jew living in Rome, or even in Italy, ever took upon himself this Messianic designation.[2] In default, therefore, of any other historic person, the reference must be taken as applying to Jesus, who had long before this time been granted that title by the Synoptic writers.

And, lastly, we need not even wonder at the

[1] Cp. Spinoza, *Theologico-Political Tract* (chap. xii., end).

[2] The pseudo-Messiah Bar Kocheba (*temp.* Hadrian) confined his activities to Palestine.

extreme ignorance and confusion which Suetonius displays in placing the scene of Our Lord's activity in Rome, and regarding Him as still living in the reign of Claudius. Both errors are probably due to the carelessness and inattention with which Suetonius treated a matter that did not really interest him, or his friends and contemporaries.

Before concluding this chapter, we have also to deal with the references to Christ and Christianity which are found in the celebrated Letters of Pliny, the nephew and heir of Pliny the Naturalist.

Caius Cæcilius Secundus (commonly called Pliny the Younger) was born in 61 A.D., and became a pupil of Quintilian, and later an advocate in Rome. He was subsequently appointed Proprætor of Bithynia and Pontica (103–105 A.D.), and in that capacity wrote many official reports and letters to the Emperor Trajan.

In his well-known inquiry (*circa* 104 A.D.) into the lives and circumstances of the Christians living in his province, which investigation was carried out at the orders of the Emperor, he reports: "There are many of every age, and of both sexes, and not only cities, but country towns and rural districts have been touched by the contagion of this superstition."[1]

Again, he adds in the same Epistle (97, 98):

[1] *Epist.* x. 96.

"I have found nothing [against them] beyond an unbounded and perverse superstition"—a view of Christianity practically identical with that of Tacitus and Suetonius. Finally, Pliny reports that, "those who obstinately persisted that they were Christians, after being warned of the consequence, I ordered to be led off to punishment, nothing doubting that whatever it was that they professed, their inflexible obstinacy deserved it."

The Emperor, in reply to this report, ordered that, if information were laid and proof obtained, the Christians, if obstinate, were to be punished. They were, however, not to be sought out, and if any denied that he was a Christian, and paid reverence to the State gods, he was to be given the benefit of the doubt.

The chief point of interest in Pliny's report, however, is the statement that he had heard, in the course of his inquiries, first of all from heathen sources, that the Christians neither sacrificed to the gods, nor yet offered incense to the Emperor, and that they refused, when bidden, to 'curse *Christus*'; and, secondly, from the Christians themselves upon examination, that they held early morning and evening meetings, at the former of which they sang songs of praise to Christ 'as if to a god' (*quasi deo*), and made holy vows, and at the latter partook of common meals.

In reply to the above statements, Professor Drews asserts that, "in all probability Pliny's

letter to the Emperor is a later Christian forgery." He also objects that Jesus is nowhere in the Letters referred to as an historical person, but rather as a divine being. Other writers have (as usual) pronounced the passage interpolated.

It will be impossible, within the limits at our disposal, to discuss in any detail all these questions.[1] It must suffice, therefore, to say that the alleged inconsistency of these punishments, legal or illegal, with the established Roman policy and practice of tolerating every *superstitio*, however absurd, is explained by the fact that Pliny evidently doubted the loyalty and fidelity to the Emperor of those who stoutly refused to make the customary offering of incense to his statue. It was for that reason, as also on account of their 'exclusive' and 'unsocial' attitude, that he exercised such severity, and that the Roman populace rose against them. Indeed, the context of the letter indicates very clearly that Pliny suspected the Christians of forming secret and illegal societies (*hetæriæ*) of a political character. With the view of ascertaining whether this were so, or not, he put to the torture two deaconesses (*ministræ*).

[1] The matter has been fully investigated by Platner (*Bibliography of the Younger Pliny*, 1895), and Wilde (*De. C. Plinii Cæcilii Secundi et Imp. Traj. Epp. mutuis Disputatio*, 1889), who maintain the genuineness of the letter and the quotations.

With regard to Professor Drews' remark that in the Letters Jesus does not appear as an historical person, but as a god, it is worthy of notice that Pliny does not say, or even imply, that Christ was addressed in the hymns *as a god*, that is to say, a god in the sense in which the term was understood by the devotees of the various nature-cults. The hymns were sung '*quasi* deo' —'*as if* to a god.' It is a reasonable inference, from this wording of the phrase, to affirm that the Christians fully recognized the full humanity and historical nature of Jesus. That there was, at that time and subsequently, a strong tendency — chiefly in Gnostic and Docetic circles — to deny the humanity of Christ, is, of course, well-known. But the *main* current of primitive Christianity always struggled, and in the end successfully, against this view, and also against any separation of the Christ from the historic Jesus.

The evidence of Pliny's Letters as to the Roman policy towards the Christians is, furthermore, corroborated by an extant rescript of Hadrian to Minucius Fundanus, the Proconsul of Asia, from which it appears that the people of that Province had been accustomed to assail the Christians in a tumultuous and illegal fashion. The Emperor strictly enjoins here that, for the future, they are to be brought to trial in a regular and lawful manner.

The authenticity of this edict, which has been questioned on insufficient grounds, was long ago discussed and defended by Keim.[1]

[1] In an article in the *Theol. Jahrb.* (1857), p. 387 : "Doubts as to the genuineness of the Edict of Hadrian concerning the Christians."

CHAPTER VI.

THE JESUS OF JEWISH TRADITION.

The authorities upon which we have to depend for a knowledge of the views held by the Jews, in the earlier ages of the Church, with regard to Jesus, are mainly (i) the *Talmud*, and (ii) the writings of certain of the earlier Apologists and Fathers, as, *e.g.*, Justin Martyr and Origen; also (iii) the mass of tradition and legend finally embodied in the *Toledoth Jeschu* ('Origins of Jesus') —a source far inferior in point of value to the two previously mentioned. In this chapter, however, we will confine ourselves exclusively to the first- and the last-named.

In dealing with both the above sources, it will be necessary to state at the outset our position with regard to them in a few preliminary remarks.

Whatever date may be assigned to the committal to writing of the matter which composes the various portions of the Talmud,[1] it must

[1] Perhaps the earlier portions (the Mishna) were committed to writing somewhere about 200 A.D., and the whole work was probably in MS., as we now have it, before 500 A.D.

always be remembered that this work contains a much earlier *oral* tradition and teaching.

As regards the *value* of the matter found in the Talmud, it is the custom of most modern scholars to dismiss it summarily as wholly legendary in character, and, therefore, absolutely worthless as evidence in any inquiry like the present.

We venture to think, however, that this view is a mistaken one. It is true, of course, that no particular and uncorroborated statement in the Talmud can safely be used as direct evidence for the truth of any event, or the existence of any person, with which, or whom, history is concerned. But at the same time, it is, we believe, equally true that, *indirectly*, the Talmud is often of great value for the purpose of throwing a sidelight, so to speak, upon some question, or corroborating some statements which are under historic examination.[1]

Approaching this aspect of our present subject, therefore, with these preliminary postulates as our guide during the inquiry, we have to ascertain, as far as may be within the limits of a single chapter, what the *Talmud*, and—in a lesser degree—the *Toledoth Jeschu* have to say about Jesus,

[1] Dr. S. A. Cooke very truly remarks (*The Guardian*, 18th August 1911, p. 1094): "Historical criticism realizes that the most circumstantial narrative, free from all suspicion of mythological *motifs*, may be historically valueless; and that incredible narratives, with all the marks of myth and legend, may encircle actual persons and events."

i.e. about the historic character of His birth, life, mission, death and resurrection.

But here we must enter another *caveat*. As the references to Jesus, and His teaching, found in these works, are frequently of a cryptic nature, and, moreover, often differ considerably in their statements, it will not be possible for us to get a perfectly developed and clearly cut portrait of Jesus as seen by the Jews of that time. Neither, of course, can its accuracy in any detail be guaranteed, nor is there any need that it should be. No doubt, too, there were many and various views and opinions amongst the Jews respecting Jesus, as on other matters. Still, it is perhaps possible for us, even to-day, to obtain a fair outline sketch of His 'official' portrait, which will amply suffice for the purpose which we have in view.

The first notice which will claim our attention here is a tradition embodied in the Talmud, regarding the genealogy of Our Lord, two variant forms of which, given in the first and third Gospels, are familiar to Christian readers. These genealogies, as is well-known, have long been matters of much controversy. Some scholars have inclined to the view that they were originally not only quite separate documents from the rest of their respective Gospels, but were added some time after the compilation of the latter, perhaps very late in the first or early in the second century A.D. In any case, they undoubtedly

represent, in their present form, and from our modern standpoint, a quite valueless attempt to affiliate Our Lord's progenitors with a direct line of descent from Abraham and from Adam respectively.

Despite this fact, however, it will be instructive to see what the Talmud has to say upon this subject; and we accordingly find the following passage in the *Mishna* referring to the matter: "Simeon ben Azzai has said: 'I found in Jerusalem a book of genealogies; therein was written that *So and So* is an illegitimate son (*mamser*) of a married woman.'"[1]

This, at first sight, seems vague; but we find upon reference that Simeon ben Azzai was a Jewish Rabbi who lived at the end of the first century, and belonged to the generation immediately preceding that of the famous Rabbi Akiba, the supporter of the pseudo-Messiah Bar Kocheba in his revolt against the Romans (132–135 A.D.). 'So and So,' likewise, is a well-known Talmudic and cryptic reference to Jesus, who when directly mentioned by name is termed Jeschu. In many copies of the Talmud, indeed, His name is suppressed from fear of a not wholly unreasonable Christian hostility, and some designation or other, which was well understood by the Jews, substituted in its place.[2]

[1] Jebamoth, 49[a].

[2] Some of these are very offensive: 'the fellow'; 'he who may

Now, the above reference—which we may take provisionally as an actual statement of this Rabbi, that he had found such an entry in the Temple records *before* 70 A.D.—is interesting, and not impossible. In times when genealogies were of the highest importance both to families and individuals, records of family descents were carefully stored up in Temple archives, much as records of marriages are kept to this day in English parish churches.[1] Many families of that time, no doubt, claimed a descent from Abraham, or David, or other Jewish worthies, and these would be anxious to have tables of such descents registered and deposited there. But this particular genealogy, Rabbi Simeon states, showed that 'So and So' was 'the *illegitimate* son of a married woman.'

It is unfortunate that our present Greek text of Matt. i. 16 is so uncertain. The majority of the readings describe Jesus as the Son of Mary, the wife of Joseph. The ancient Syriac palimpsest MS. discovered at Sinai, and published in 1904, says, however: 'Joseph . . . *begat* Jesus.'[2]

But whether this be so or not, there can be no doubt that the earliest Christians attached no

not be (or ought not to be) named,' etc. In the *Toledoth Jeschu* very slanderous epithets are used.

[1] Josephus, *Vita*, i.

[2] See *Hibbert Journal* (October 1902), 'Early Doctr. Modifications of Gosp.' also *ibid.* (January 1903), pp. 354–59. The question is analysed and discussed in the present writer's *Critical Examination of the Evidences for the Doctr. of the Virg. Birth*, i–iii.

importance to any exact definition of this problem, and undoubtedly referred to Jesus as 'the Son of Joseph,' in a formal and legal sense, if in no other. When the Matthæan genealogy[1] (the earlier of the two lists found in the Gospels) was introduced, the question seems to have been discussed as a matter of prime importance, and the result of that discussion is the various conflicting readings in the MSS. upon which the text of our present Gospels is based.

Now, if the Rabbi's reference, in the above-quoted saying, be to Jesus—and it would be difficult to controvert the application—we have clear and distinct reference to His birth in the *earlier* Jewish tradition—a reference, moreover, which is stated to be an extract from a genealogical table found in Jerusalem before the siege. There is a suggestion, too, of something unusual about the record. Of course it would be quite possible (assuming the actual existence of this record) that the original entry had been altered by the official priesthood during the period which followed the death of Jesus—or, for that matter, even previously. For it is difficult to see how Jesus could have been entered in any official, or semi-official, records otherwise than as the son of Joseph, which, having been born in

[1] Supposed by some to have been derived from the family records of Joseph the carpenter, who appears to have claimed to be an impoverished descendant of the royal house of David.

wedlock, He was, in any case, from the Jewish legal point of view. If, however, any alteration were made after the death of Jesus, it seems probable that it would date from the time of the publication of the Matthæan genealogy, as a document separate from the (later) gospel.

But, in any case, the interesting quotation from an alleged Jerusalemite genealogy is valuable for our present purpose, because it shows at least that the Jews of the generations immediately succeeding that of Jesus acknowledged the actual birth, and, therefore, so far, the *historical character* of the Founder of Christianity. For the Talmud seems distinctly to bear witness to an alleged registration of that birth in the Temple archives at Jerusalem.

But, in addition to this, we find that the Birth Stories of the two Synoptics have also their equivalents—or rather caricatures—in the Talmud. Indeed, there is no event in the life of Jesus which is oftener, or in a more offensive and slanderous manner, referred to in Jewish tradition. The Jewish versions of the event vary considerably in their details[1]; but, in the main, the story is presented as follows: Miriam, the mother of Jesus, is described generally as a woman's hair-

[1] The tradition is very confused and contradictory on all points. Mary appears to be confounded with Mary Magdalene, and the name of her husband is variously given. It is impossible to form a consistent narrative out of it.

dresser,[1] and the wife of a certain Stada. She is stated, however, to have formed an intrigue with a Pandera Pappus, son of Judas. As the result of this Jesus is born. That this disgraceful slander originated at a very early date is evidenced by Origen.[2] The *later* Jewish traditions, found, *e.g.*, in the *Toledoth Jeschu*—a most scurrilous work—which, perhaps, reached its present and final form in the ninth century, and which is compiled from various sources, give this malicious story in much greater detail, and with many fanciful additions.

In this late work the father of Jesus is said to have been a Roman soldier named Panthera, and in consequence Our Lord is chiefly styled Jeschu ben Panthera (Pandera).[3] Miriam is, for this reason, cast off by her betrothed (husband) Juchanan (John), and, after wandering about for some time, gives birth to her son.

The sojourn in Egypt also—assigned by the Matthæan synoptist to the period of the Infancy—is, by Jewish tradition, invariably referred to a much later period, and has quite different reasons assigned for it. It was from that country,

[1] This appears to have been considered a disreputable occupation.

[2] *Contr. Cels.* i. 28.

[3] Jesus is generally styled, when directly referred to, ben Stada in the *Talmud* and ben Pandera (or Jeschu ha-Notsri) in the *Toledoth*. ben Stada is never found in the Toledoth. The above two names appear to point—to a great extent—two separate lines of tradition.

say both the Talmud and the Toledoth, that Jesus brought the *magic* by means of which He wrought His 'mighty works.' Thus, we find in the Palestinian *Gemārā*: "He who *scratches* the skin in the fashion of writing is guilty; but he who [merely] makes marks on the skin in the fashion of writing is exempt from punishment. Rabbi Eliezer said to them: 'But has not ben Stada brought spells out of Egypt in this way?' They answered him: 'On account of one fool we do not ruin a multitude of reasonable men.'"[1]

In the Babylonian *Gemārā* we have a slightly different version of the story: "Rabbi Eliezer said to the wise men: 'Has not ben Stada brought magic spells from Egypt in an incision in his body?' They answered him: 'He was a fool, and we do not take proofs from fools.'"[2]

In the *Tosephta* we read further: "Rabbi Eliezer said to the wise men: 'Ben Stada surely learned sorcery by such writing.'"

The 'scratching' on the skin means, probably, magical hieroglyphs tattooed upon its surface; these were supposed to have power over dæmons. Perhaps the 'incisions' were made as temporary receptacles for spells written upon small pieces

[1] Shabbath, 13*d*.

[2] *Ibid.* 104*b*. The *Toledoth Jeschu* says that He stole the *Ineffable Name* (JHVH) from the Temple by writing it upon parchment, which He concealed in an incision in His thigh. He then, afterwards, learnt its magical use.

of parchment, or paper, and sewed up in the wound.

Another mention of this is met with in the *Gemārā* of the Palestinian Talmud. But there the question is as to the lawfulness of such writing on the Sabbath day.

Talmudic tradition also tells us that Jesus chose *five* disciples to aid Him in His work. But why this number is chosen, instead of the twelve of the Christian records, it would be difficult to say. Thus we find a passage which says: "Jeschu had five disciples (*talmidim*), Mathai [Matthew], Nakai [? Nicodemus (Laible)], Nezer [?], Bonai [? Nicodemus (Thilo)], Todah [? Thaddeus; Theudas (Laible)].[1]

The works performed by the disciples of Jesus, also seem to find an echo in Jewish tradition, as witness the following story; "Rabbi Eliezer, the son of Dama, was bitten by a serpent; and there came to him Jacob [= James], a man of Kaphar Secama,[2] to heal him by means of the name of Jeschu, son of Pandera;[3] but Rabbi Ishmael[4]

[1] *Bab. Talm.*, Sanhedrin Tract, 43[a].

[2] Voisin quotes a Massoretic gloss on the *Abōdā Zārā*, which says that this Jacob was one of the disciples of Jeschu.

[3] Cp. Matt. vii. 22; Luke x. 17; Acts iii. 6; xix. 13, etc. Instead of these words, common copies of the Midrash have 'in the name of *a certain one*.' The name is suppressed, probably from fear of the Christians.

[4] Rabbi Ishmael — without any suffix — always stands in the Talmud for R. Ishmael ben Elisha, the contemporary of R. Akiba, the famous Rabbi already mentioned, who flourished early in the second century.

suffered him not, saying: 'That is not allowed to thee, son of Dama.' He answered him: 'Suffer me, and I will produce an authority against thee, that it is lawful.' But he could not produce an authority before he died. And what was the authority? It was: 'Which, if a man do, he shall live in them' (Lev. xviii. 5). But it is not said that he shall die in them."[1]

The same story is found in the *Palestinian Talmud* with the following addition,[2] that R. Ishmael pronounced the dead man blessed, in spite of the divine judgment (his death) on the meditated disobedience, for having escaped this unholy cure, in reference to which he quotes Eccles. x. 8.

Another case is quoted in the Midrash on Eccles. x. 5: "The son of R. Jehoshua ben Levi had something in his throat. He went and fetched one of the men [disciples] of ben Pandera to extract what he had swallowed. Jehoshua said to him, 'What didst thou say over him?' He answered, 'A certain verse after *a certain man*.' He said, 'It had been better for him had he buried him, and not said over him that verse.'"

The miracles of Jesus are almost entirely passed over by the Talmud, and in Midrashim, etc. But in the Toledoth Jeschu line of tradition several are described of a foolish character, and only

[1] *Midrash Koheleth*, or Comm. on Eccles. i. 8.
[2] Tract *Abōdā Zārā* (on Idolatry).

comparable to those recorded in some of the Christian Apocryphs. Thus, in the Toledoth, when sent for by Queen Helene,[1] 'the ruler of the land of Israel,' to answer a charge of sorcery, and of leading men astray, Jesus is said to have uttered the Ineffable Name, in her presence, over some clay sparrows, which then became alive and flew away. Another feat was the placing of a millstone upon the sea, where it floated when He sat upon it.[2] He is also said to have flown up into the air, when brought before the queen, who thereupon commissioned Judas Iscariot to emulate the performance, which he did, by means of the same power, 'because the *Shem ha-Mephoresh* was equally with him.' Judas is said finally to have conquered by means of a trick: 'he befouled Jeschu, so that he was made unclean, and fell to the earth, and with him Judas.'

Sufficient has now been quoted of these stories of the earlier life of Jesus—mostly foolish in their character—to show the slight thread of historical tradition which runs through them, the tradition, that is to say, of an *actual Man*, who lived and worked, and was remembered by the people and their teachers. We will now turn to those referring to His later life.

The Toledoth relates how Jesus was brought

[1] Apparently the Empress Helena, the 'inventress' of the Cross, is meant, a most absurd anachronism.

[2] Suggested, perhaps, by Matt. xviii. 6, and parallels.

for punishment to the Synagogue of Tiberias. There He was bound to 'the pillars of the ark,' and had a crown of thorns placed upon His head. But He was rescued by the 'Apostates,' and went to Antioch, and from that city to Jerusalem, which He entered upon an ass on the rest day of the Passover. Then one of His disciples, named Gaïsa (gardener), arranged to betray Him by means of an obeisance: He was thereupon seized by the 'wise men.'

One variant of the Talmudic story of the trial and condemnation of Jesus runs as follows: "Thus . . . they managed with *ben Sot'da* at Lud.[1] Against him two disciples of learned men were placed in concealment, and he was brought before the Court of Justice [condemned] and *stoned*."[2]

The Babylonian *Gemārā* tells a similar tale, relating how witnesses are placed in hiding, in order that they may hear the suspected person's talk, and so be able to give evidence against him. Then, it explains, another man would ask: "How can we abandon our God in heaven, and practise idolatry?" If the suspected person answered: "Such is our duty, and so we like to have it," then the witnesses, who were listening, brought him to the tribunal, by whom he was

[1] A variant form of *Satda*, or *Stada*. Lud was a small town near Joppa.

[2] *Palest. Tal.*, Sanhed. Tract, iii. 25*d*.

condemned and executed. "And thus did they," says the writer, "to *ben Stada* at Lud; and they *hanged* him on the day before the Passover."[1]

Another variant of the Talmudic account of the charge, trial and execution is given without any mention of Lud: "On the Sabbath of the Passover festival *Jeschu* was *hanged.* Now the herald went forth beforehand for the space of forty days, while he cried: 'Jeschu goeth forth to be executed, because he has practised sorcery, and seduced Israel, and estranged them from God. Let any one who can bring forward any justifying plea for him come forward and give information concerning it.' But no justifying plea was found for him, and so he was *hanged* on the Sabbath of the Passover festival. Ulla[2] has said, 'But dost thou think that he belongs to those for whom a justifying plea is to be sought? He was a very seducer, and the All Merciful has said: Thou shalt not spare him, nor conceal him' (Deut. xiii. 8). However, in Jeschu's case it was somewhat different; for his place was near those in power."[3]

[1] *Bab. Tal.*, Sanhed. Tract, 67*a*.

[2] A Palestinian Rabbi of the early fourth century.

[3] *Bab. Tal.*, Sanhed. Tract, 43*a*. Laible (*Jesus Christ im Talmud*) thinks that Pilate and the Romans are meant here. It is curious to note the entire absence of Pilate's name, and also any mention of a *Roman* trial. Probably the pride of the later Jews forbade their admitting that the Jews of Our Lord's time had no power to inflict capital punishment. A modern Jewish writer, Rabbi Aaron P. Drucker, however, endeavours to prove (*The*

There is also a further reference in the *Targum Sheni* to Esth. vii. 9, where 'the lecture platform of ben Pandera' is mentioned in connection with the rivalry between Mordecai and Haman. This is clearly intended as a grim jest upon the 'tree' whereon Jesus suffered death.[1]

But the fullest parody of the Gospel Crucifixion narratives is to be found in the Toledoth Jeschu. We will here summarize its version of that event.

When Jesus was seized 'the apostates began to lament, but could not deliver him.' The time of His execution is described as 'on a Friday, or rest day before the Passover and the Sabbath.' Then follows the extraordinary statement that 'when they would hang him on a *tree* (*holz*), it brake, for the *Name* was with him.' Then—since no tree would bear His weight—a *cabbage-stalk* was tried, which did not break.

This is explained in the Toledoth as being due to the fact that Jesus had foreseen the manner of His death, and had, therefore, uttered the *Name* over all *trees*; but—the writer quaintly adds—had not done so over the cabbage-stalk; for that is not a tree, but a *vegetable*; and, consequently, was unaffected by the spell cast upon trees.

Trial of Jesus from Jewish Sources) that the Jews had nothing to do with the charges brought against Jesus, and that Caiaphas was in reality a Roman spy.

[1] It may be noted here that the Romans frequently referred to the cross as 'infelix *arbor*,' and spoke of being *hanged* upon it. See Liv. i. 26; Cic. Pro Rabir. 4 etc

The narrative then goes on to relate that Jesus was allowed to hang upon the cabbage-stalk, 'until the time of the afternoon prayer,' a statement which tallies generally with the Gospel accounts. The reason given for the removal of the body the same day, seems, however, to differ slightly. It is written: 'His body shall not remain all night upon the tree.'

A much greater divergence is found in the account of the burial: 'They buried him,' says the writer, 'on the *first* day of the week'; and His disciples are described as 'weeping over his grave'—a statement indirectly contradicted by the Gospels. Then follows a curious, rambling story, full of gross anachronisms and palpable fictions. The 'apostates' are said to have sent to the Queen, announcing that Jesus had, after death, ascended up to heaven, and thus triumphed over the Jews. Then the Queen sent to the latter, to ask what they had done with the body of Jesus. They replied that they had buried it; but, when they afterwards sought for it, the body was gone. The Queen, however, insisted on its being produced, so, after stipulating for sufficient time, the Jews again began their search, but still were unable to ascertain where it was.

Thereupon was great lamentation in Israel; but an 'elder,' named Rabbi Tanchuma, came forward at last, and informed them that *he* had removed it from the grave in the garden, and

digged another in the bed of a stream, and placed the body therein, and allowed the water to flow over the spot again, and thus hide the grave. The body of Jesus is then dug up again by the Jews, and dragged by means of cords round the streets of Jerusalem, and then brought before the Queen. "Here," said they, "is he who ascended up to heaven!" The Queen then "mocked the apostates," who fled, "three of them to Mount Ararat, three of them to Armenia, three of them to Rome, and others to other places, and they misled the people." "But"—the writer rejoices to add—"everywhere, where they took refuge, God sent his judgments upon them, and they were slain."

It will have been noted by the attentive reader that there are several points of contact between these—in the main—nonsensical narratives, and the story of the condemnation and death of Jesus as told in the Gospels. And a careful analysis and comparison will indicate clearly the historical thread which runs throughout, sometimes even in the greatest absurdities. The statements found in both Talmud and Toledoth cannot be derived from the Gospels; this much is plain even from the disagreement and contradictions which exist between them. Their common basis of agreement, therefore, must rest upon a common record of actual historic events—events which have become distorted, and, in a greater or less degree,

exaggerated and misstated in the course of transmission from generation to generation, culminating in the grosser absurdities of the Toledoth.

But Professor Drews will have none of the Talmud as even an imperfect source of history. He says,[1] quoting Kropatscheck[2]: "The Talmud gives a hostile caricature of his advent, which has *no historical value.*" A caricature, no doubt, and of no great, or direct, value as history. But still of *some* value, at least indirectly, as to the historical nature of what is caricatured. And its evidential value, *in this sense*, can only be gauged by critical examination, whereby the grain of pure gold can be separated from the mass of dross in which it is embedded, and wholly lost, it may be, to the sight of the uncritical eye. Then, beneath all the chaotic mass of legend—and even rubbish—of later Jewish tradition, there stands revealed to the sympathetic critic the actual figure of a *Man.*

Moreover, it is a notorious fact that no Jewish teacher, or writer, has ever questioned the existence of the Jesus of the Gospels. In all their bitterest controversies with the Christians, throughout the last eighteen centuries and more, no Rabbi has even suggested that Jesus was not an historical personality. What would have been easier, or more effective, as an answer to their Christian opponents, if there were no real basis of fact for

[1] *The Christ Myth*, 3rd ed. p. 234.

[2] Writing in *Kreuzzeitung* (7th April 1910). Italics ours.

the story of Jesus, than to have asserted directly and boldly: "Your Jesus had no real existence in history. Our records contain no mention of any such historic person."

Such a retort made eighteen, or more, centuries ago, or even generations afterwards, would have been quite unanswerable. But this is exactly the line of defence which the Jews have never adopted. Jesus was, they said, a sorcerer; Jesus was a false Messiah; Jesus was a seducer of the people from the worship of the true God; but He was *never* a mere imaginary being—an *Idea*, simply, to use the philosophical terminology of to-day.

We deduce, therefore, from this important fact, as also from the absurdities and fictions of Jewish tradition, as these are found in Talmud and Toledoth, that there are here also strong lines of evidence to show that Jesus the Nazoræan was, what the other sources of our knowledge unite in affirming Him to be, an actual historic being, and no mere figment of the human imagination. But at the same time the other sources of our knowledge of Him declare that He was utterly unlike the picture which is painted for us in the literature of Jewish tradition.

Before closing this brief examination of Jewish views regarding Jesus, there is another point which must be noticed, since it is one of considerable importance for our present inquiry, and, therefore, demands attention, though it cannot be

discussed at all adequately here. We find also in the Talmud apparently a mention of quite a different Jesus from the one who is the subject of the Gospel narratives. Briefly stated, it seems that this *other Jesus* must have lived in the reign of King Jannai (John),[1] and would seem to have been excommunicated for heterodox opinions by a certain Rabbi ben Perachiah, and also (it seems) put to death by *stoning*. The reader will doubtless remember that in the various traditions discussed above, Jesus was in some accounts spoken of as finally *hanged*; but in others as being at last *stoned* to death.

Now, the question arises—a question, which, as we have already remarked, is one of great moment for the subject of our present discussion—are these various accounts mere confused traditions, mere confused statements relating to *one* historic person, or do they refer to *two* separate men? This is a problem which, as yet, has received very inadequate attention from both Jewish and Christian historians and scholars.

Some writers of more recent years have maintained that the tradition of ben Pandera, or ben Stada, does not refer to the Jesus of the Gospels at all; it refers wholly, they think, to this 'pre-Christian

[1] He bore also the Greek name of Alexander, and was the son of John Hyrcanus. He reigned over Judæa from 104–78 B.C., during which period he had a perpetual feud with the party of the Pharisees, many of whom he put to death by crucifixion (Josephus, *B.J.* I. iv. 6; *Ant.* XIII. xiv. 2).

Jesus'—an historic person of King Jannai's time. Such a view leaves the question of the historicity of the Jesus of the Gospels, in a sense, an open question, so far as Talmudic and other extant Jewish evidence is concerned. He would, in that case, be either some other person, or, as Professor Drews urges, a mere mythical ingraft upon historic narrative.

But this solution of the question is, in the first place, wholly contrary to all Jewish opinion in every age, which distinctly and firmly holds to the identity of the ben Pandera, or ben Stada, with the Jesus of the Gospels; and, for many other reasons also, seems to the present writer in the highest degree improbable. Setting aside the possibility that the Jesus of King Jannai's time is a mere fiction of the Rabbis (and indeed there is no historical evidence for his existence outside of the Talmud, and very little in it), and even allowing that some noted teacher, bearing the popular name of Jesus, it may be, did exist a century or so before the time of Christ,—we have in Talmudic and other notices too many obvious references to the Jesus of the Gospels to be explained away as meant for some other person. It would be presumptuous to offer here any dogmatical assertion, but the present writer believes it will be found that *both* Jesuses were historical persons, and that the Rabbis of the early Christian centuries confused them either in a spirit of carelessness, and through

inadvertence, or else wilfully, in their eagerness to defame the hated name of the Gospel Jesus. If this be the case, the fact will go a long way towards explaining the confusions and anachronisms which characterize the delineation of the Christian Jesus, which we find everywhere in the Talmud, and also in the other lines of Jewish teaching and tradition.

PART II

THE MYTHICAL DATA

CHAPTER VII.

PRE-CHRISTIAN JESUS-CULTS.

A VERY important and almost essential part of Professor Drews' theory of a Christ-myth is the alleged existence among the Jews, in pre-Christian times, of one or more cults, the members of which he supposes worshipped a kind of Redeemer- or Healer-God, who was named by them 'Jesus.'

Furthermore, these cults, in his opinion, would seem to have formed a connecting link, so to speak, between the purely Jewish Apocalyptic Messianism of the post-exilic period, and the vegetative-solar and orgiastic nature-cults found at that time, and long subsequently, in the neighbouring countries of Asia Minor, and in Egypt, Assyria and even Greece, in some cases at least, alongside of a higher and more formal State religion, in which sacrifices and ritual acts and words formed the most essential part.

Now, extending his inquiries into the dim region of early Hebrew history, where much is problematical and vague, and somewhat hastily adopting, as the basis of his arguments, the dubious

speculations of other writers,[1] Professor Drews practically assumes that Israel possessed, before the days of a State-organized Jahvism, an old and primitive, but unofficial, form of sun-worship, similar to that out of which all the various 'redeemer' cults are often supposed to have arisen, but which, it now seems probable, were based upon a still earlier cult of the spirit of vegetative life.

Now, it is well-known that Israel found, upon their arrival in Canaan, a widespread local worship of the Baʿalim, which continued to exist for many generations alongside of the worship of Jahveh, with which, indeed, it was to some extent confused.[2] But this Baʿalism, again, though for a long time thought to be a mere variety of sun-worship, is now believed to have been the mere deification and propitiation of the local reproductive powers in nature, as manifested in generation in the animal world, and in the fruits yielded annually by the earth. Sun-worship, properly so-called, is something both later, and essentially different from this Baʿalism, at least in the form which it takes in these and allied cults.

[1] Notably Professor W. B. Smith (*The Pre-Christian Jesus*), and Mr. J. M. Robertson (*Christianity and Mythology*, and *Pagan Christs*, etc.).

[2] The primitive worship of the (?) desert God Jahveh was largely baʿalized, *i.e.* assimilated to the cults of the local and agricultural *baʿalim*, soon after Israel's arrival. It was then afterwards *ethicized* by the exertions of the prophets, especially the later and writing prophets.

The solar powers, like those of the earth, appear to wane annually at the time of the winter-solstice; but they do so in each case only to 'rise' again in spring and restore once more to mankind the blessings of the previous year. This—stated briefly—is the common basis of all those solar- and vegetation-cults, in which the great luminary, alike with the fruits of the ground, is represented anthropomorphically as a handsome youth, who is ultimately and annually slain by the scorching rays of the summer sun, or the winter storms and frosts, represented, perhaps, as in the Adonis-cult, by a fierce boar, or, as in that of Osiris, by his wicked brother Set.[1] And the preliminary question in this inquiry is—What evidences are there—if any—for the existence of such cults amongst the Jews in pre-Christian times?

Some modern scholars,[2] it is true, have affirmed that they could detect slight traces of them amongst the early Hebrews in the existing text of the books of the Old Testament, our chief and almost sole authority for the earlier periods.

[1] It may, perhaps, be pointed out here that such cults, whether in the main of a vegetative or solar character, are wholly a mere worship (in the lowest sense) of the powers of Reproduction. Consequently they are (with the partial exception of the Osiris variant) *unethical*. They were invariably associated with the most licentious orgies on the part of their devotees, who strove to emulate and (upon the principles of homœopathic magic) to stimulate the powers of Nature.

[2] Notably Dr. Winckler, the brilliant Assyriologist, as set forth in his *Geschichte Israels in Einzeldarstellungen* (1900).

Mr. J. M. Robertson, however—followed closely by Professor W. B. Smith—goes much further than this, and settles somewhat off-hand this very difficult question. He says: "That Joshua is a purely mythical personage, was long ago decided by the historical criticism of the school of Colenso and Kuenen; that he was originally a solar deity can be established at least as satisfactorily as the solar character of Moses, if not as that of Samson. And when we note that in Semitic tradition (which preserves a variety of myths, that the Bible-makers, for obvious reasons, suppressed or transformed) Joshua is the son of the mythical Miriam,[1] that is to say, there was probably an ancient Palestinian Saviour sun-god, Jesus, the Son of Mary, we are led to surmise that the elucidation of the Christ-myth is not yet complete."[2]

The extent to which Mr. Robertson's vivid imagination has enabled him to fill in the numerous *lacunæ*, which exist in our present actual knowledge of the subject, will, however, be better understood from another quotation, giving all the facts, so far as they are at present available.

"The historical character of Joshua, as an individual," writes Dr. Cheyne, "is doubtful. It was natural to provide Moses with attendants,

[1] Citing Baring-Gould, *Legends of O.T. Characters* (1871), ii. 138.

[2] *Christianity and Mythology*, pp. 82, 83.

and to give a name to the chief of these (Num. xi. 28), who was in training to become Moses' successor.

"Nor could such a successor have a more suitable name than 'Jehoshua.'[1] . . . Naturally he would be assigned to the tribe which had the leadership in early times [Ephraim, Num. xiii. 8], and if Joseph was (as Winckler maintains) a solar hero, it would not be surprising if details of solar mythical origin attached themselves to the Joshua tradition."[2] The fact is, that the whole of Mr. Robertson's theory here is based upon a speculation of several German scholars, that Joseph was originally a 'solar hero,' and only afterwards historicized into a son of Jacob. And so with Joshua, in like manner.

Another and very different conjecture is, that Joshua, as the son of Nun [נוּן, Nûn = 'fish,' 'serpent,'] was a member of a fish—or perhaps a serpent-clan, fishes and serpents being much confused in ancient times. The word *Nun*, Cheyne thinks, is probably a shortened form of *Nahshon*, which *might* mean (he says) 'a little serpent.' These speculations, however, open up

[1] (?) = 'Jahveh (is) deliverance' [but see p. 178]; a shorter form is *Joshua*. Philo explains it as Ἰησοῦς ἑρμενεύεται, σωτηρία κυρίου, 'Jesus [Joshua] is interpreted (as) safety of the Lord.' The same name, mostly written *Jeshua* [יֵשׁוּעַ] in later times, was borne by the High Priest in the reign of Darius I., and by many other persons.

[2] *Ency. Bibl.*, art. 'Joshua.'

the difficult question as to whether a system of *Totemism* prevailed amongst the Israelites in primitive times, a theory for which there is certainly some evidence, but regarding which there is considerable diversity of opinion.[1]

Yet another view explains Naḥshon as a corruption of Ḥushan, or Ḥusham, an Edomite name in Gen. xxxviiii. 34. Dr. Cheyne finally sums up the whole question: "Joshua was the closest of the friends of Moses, and must have belonged to the same clan, if we should not treat both Moses and Joshua as the eponyms of kindred clans. Now Joshua should be another form of Abishua = Abisheba, which is an Aaronite name and closely resembles Eli-sheba, the name of a Judahite clan, with which 'Aaron' intermarried. That Abi-sheba and Eli-sheba are really names of the same clan can hardly be doubted. Now Eli-sheba is introduced to us as a 'daughter of Amminadab, sister of Naḥshon.' It is very probable that, according to another representation, Josheba, or Abi-sheba, or Eli-sheba, was the son of Naḥshon, and that נחשון [Naḥshon] was sometimes written in the abbreviated form נון [Nûn]."[2]

Enough has now been said upon this particular

[1] See 'Animal Tribes in the O.T.' (*Lects. and Essays of W. R. Smith*, 1912); also 'Totemism in the O.T.,' by H. J. D. Astley, in *The Quest*, April 1912, with Frazer's *Totemism and Exogamy*, iv. pp. 13 ff.

[2] *Ency. Bibl.*, art. 'Nun,' to which (and 'Joshua') the reader is referred for further discussion and details.

point to show the extreme danger of drawing hasty inferences from even brilliant speculations.[1] The fact is that 'Joshua' *may* be explained—with more or less plausibility—in several ways; and it is still not improbable that he was some conspicuous tribal hero, who took part in the conquest of Canaan, and whose exploits have, perhaps, been magnified by the patriotism of later chroniclers.

Mr. Robertson, however, despite the great lack of really direct evidence, is quite sure about the early worship of an Ephraimite sun-god named 'Joshua,' which (he thinks) was, later, carried on in opposition to the national cult of Jahveh by certain secret societies, who carefully kept as much as possible out of the notice of the official priesthood of their time. And it would seem that, in his view, this ancient (and from a later standpoint 'heretical') worship in time became amalgamated (or confused) with the Messianism which sprung up and flourished so vigorously during the post-exilian period. That there were, at this time (and probably earlier), societies of a more or less secret character who professed, in greater or less degree, the special tenets peculiar to what we term Mysticism, Gnosticism and Messianism, is more than probable. Such societies

[1] Wienel says (*Ist das 'liberale' Jesusbild widerlegt?* p. 91) that any argument based upon the connection of Jesus with Joshua is 'simply grotesque.'

have existed in almost every age, and alongside of, or within, almost every form of religious belief.

It so happens, also, that the names of some of such societies—existing in the early Christian centuries (if not previously) have been handed down to us. And Professor Drews, drawing upon the meagre information which we have respecting them, has made these two assumptions: (i) that such sects held to the belief in, and worshipped a god of purely *solar* origin, who 'died and rose again' for the good of mankind, and (ii) that the same god, later on, became identified, in the mind of St. Paul and the earliest Christians, with the *Messiah*, who was expected even by the 'orthodox' section of the Jewish people. In other words, the sun-god Joshua (Jesus), and the Messiah, or Christ, were eventually combined and embodied in an *imaginary* Jesus Christ, from Galilee, in the first century of the Christian era.

This theory, perhaps very plausible at first sight, is, however, partly based upon extremely uncertain speculative considerations, and partly upon precarious *data*, which are both very scanty in amount, and very difficult to interpret. We will, therefore, proceed to examine briefly the grounds of this hypothesis, so far as the information to hand at the moment will admit of our so doing.[1]

[1] It should be noted that at one of the public discussions of the subject, held in Germany, Professor Drews insisted that his view

We will take first of all an obscure sect, existing at least in Christian times—the *Jessaer*.[1]

Our knowledge of these people is wholly derived from a brief, and not very clear, reference to them in Epiphanius (*Hær.* xxix). The name of the sect would seem to be probably derived from *Jesse*, the father of David,[2] though Professor Drews clearly desires to think that they more probably named themselves after 'Jesus'—the old cult-god.

Professor von Soden, on the other hand, declares that "it can only be derived from Jesse, . . . Perhaps," he continues, "it was a sect which believed in the Messiah, and expected Him as the Son of David, to come of the root of Jesse, or Isai."[3]

These latter conclusions seem even more than probable, though we must be careful not to dogmatize. *If* the sect existed *before* the time of Christ (and Epiphanius [fourth century A.D.] is notoriously untrustworthy as an authority), they were, in all probability, one of the numerous Messianic sects who looked forward to a Messiah

that the Founder of Christianity was a purely mythical character, did not *depend* upon the existence of a pre-Christian cult-god named 'Jesus.' It is, however, in any case, a great support to the hypothesis, and practically indispensable to it. See J. Weiss, *Jesus von Nazareth; Mythus oder Geschichte?* pp. 19–21.

[1] Also written 'Jessaioi', 'Jessaes' and 'Jessenes.'

[2] Cp. Isa. ii. 1: 'the branch of the root of Jesse.'

[3] *Hat Jesus gelebt?* Eng. tr. p. 28; cp. also Isa. xi. 1–10; 1 Sam. xvi. 1; and Rom. xv. 12.

ben-David as the great hope of the race.[1] It is quite probable, too, that, regarding Him as a future descendant of David, the anointed King of Judah, they postulated a *royal* Messiah, who should revive the traditional glories of that kingdom, and bring peace and prosperity again upon earth. Probably, also — like many other Messianists in later times—they regarded the Messiah as the representative (in some *spiritual* sense) of Jahveh Himself.[2] And, if so, what is more likely than that they would bestow upon the looked-for Messiah some great name with which they were familiar, and which would aptly describe the rôle which He was expected to assume? And such was the time-honoured name of the traditional conqueror of Canaan, *Joshua*—always a popular and very common name amongst Jews in all ages. But this we do not know for certain.

There is, however, in any case, not a single scrap of credible evidence for the existence of a *Jesus-cult* among them. In fact, the very name selected for the Messiah—if, indeed, it were selected—seems to forbid such an interpretation,

[1] It must be remembered that the northern Israelites (Ephraim), and later the Samaritans, *may* possibly have expected a '*Messias ben-Joseph*' (but see chap. ix. p. 212, note 4).

[2] This idea was afterwards very much developed, especially in the Kabbalah, where the angel *Metatron* is regarded as *the visible manifestation of Deity*, cp. the (late) 'Theophanies' of the Pentateuch.

and even to suggest the exact contrary. If Joshua (? '*Jahveh* is deliverance'—but see p. 178), then He is to them simply Jahveh's earthly agent, or representative, and, *ipso facto*, not some minor god who 'redeems' on his own initiative, like the pagan 'saviour-deities.'

Indeed, we have not the slightest reason to suppose that this, or any other pre-Christian sect of Jews, or Israelites, regarded the Messiah who was to come as a 'god' in any sense of the word.[1] He was to be *sent by God*. The mere fact that they expected Him, and, perhaps, prayed for His coming, and even, it may be, gave Him the honoured name of 'Joshua' [Jesus], does not imply any *cult* of Him, in the sense of worship, such as the Christians, later on, paid to Christ.

We have, in short, no record of any pre-Christian *god* 'Jesus,' who was worshipped by these Jessaer. Such a statement is founded merely upon a rash inference drawn from the few facts which are at our disposal, and which do not, when carefully examined, support any such view.

Another sect, which is instanced by Professor Drews in support of the Jesus-cult theory, is that of the *Naasenes*, or *Ophites*.[2] He regards this

[1] In Isa. vii. 14, 'Immanu-el'=probably, and literally, merely 'the *Strong-One* with us.'

[2] Ophites from ὄφις, 'a *serpent*'=Heb. נָחָשׁ *Nahash*), whence *Naasenes*, 'serpent-worshippers.'

society as undoubtedly existing in pre-Christian times, and reverencing 'Jesus' as their cult-god.

Now, the fundamental belief of all the *later* Ophite, or Naasene, sects was that the first principle of everything was a *Spiritual Man*, who was bisexual (ἀρσενόθηλυς), and of a rational, psychical and earthly nature; and this man corresponded to the (later) Adam Kadmon of the Jewish *Kabbalah*.[1] In their Christology the human Jesus was the passive recipient of an efflux from the Divine Nature, but only mediately; for the Ophite Christ emanated conjointly from the First Principle, or Adam Kadmon, from a Second Principle, called the 'Son' (but known also by the name Ennœa [Ἔννοια]), and from a Third, and feminine, Principle, the Spirit, or Mother of Creation.[2] Thus we have a *Christ-æon* existing independently of, and antecedent to, Creation in the spiritual Pleroma forming the Supreme Godhead. Another, and lower, æonic being was Sophia (Σοφία, 'Wisdom'), also a feminine Principle, forming an intermediate link between the spiritual Pleroma of Divine beings, and the material world with its Creator.

This *Sophia* is represented as sinking down to the material chaos, where, failing to find rest, she invoked the help of the Mother Spirit, and

[1] Hippolytus, *Refut. of All Heresies*, v. 1.

[2] See Irenæus, *Against All Heresies*, i. 30; also see chap. ix. p. 212, note 1.

obtained from the First, or Archetypal Man, that the æon *Christ* should be sent to her aid, and, being united with her, should, by a descent upon Jesus at His baptism, form the Ecclesia, or Church, upon earth, which would have an eternal counterpart in heaven, in the union of Christ with the Father (Adam Kadmon), the Son (Ennœa), and the Spirit, or Creative Mother. This æonic Christ, united thus with Jesus, left Him again at His Crucifixion, and the inferior, or *psychic* Man, alone suffered death, and was buried.

Space prohibits a further exposition of this complex system of theosophy, which included several variant sects;[1] but one conclusion is very evident, viz. that the *Jesus-element* set forth above is wholly *post-Christian*, and an attempt to explain the Gospel narratives in the light of ancient occult theories. That pre-Christian Naasenes (if they existed then) managed to fit in, and identify with, one of their own æons—the Helper of Sophia perhaps—the expected Messiah of the Jews, is more than probable. They would naturally aver: "Your Messiah is merely our Helper-Æon; and *if* he is to be named Jesus (or Joshua), then we may call our Æonic Helper, when embodied in a human form, Jesus also." We have no direct evidence of this

[1] See summary given by Hippolytus (who supplements Irenæus), *Refut. of All Heresies*, x. 5.

though, and it remains a mere speculation. In any case, there is no pre-Christian *cult* of Jesus signified by their system.

Very similar to this is the evidence supplied by a Naasene hymn preserved by Hippolytus (*op. cit.* v. 5). This hymn, after describing the woes and sufferings of the human soul during its wanderings upon earth,[1] says—

> "But Jesus said: Father behold
> a war of evils has arisen upon the earth;
> it comes from thy breath, and ever works.
> Man strives to shun this bitter chaos,
> but knows not how he may pass [safely] through it.
> Therefore, do thou, O Father, send me;
> bearing thy seals I shall descend [to earth];
> throughout the ages will I pass;
> all mysteries I will unfold;
> all forms of Godhead I will unveil;
> all secrets of thy holy path,
> styled gnosis [knowledge] I will impart."

This hymn, of which we have quoted the concluding portion, shows clearly what the tenets of these Naasenes were. They were evidently a sect which—*after Christ*—professed a theosophical form of Christianity engrafted upon an older scheme of pagan Gnosticism. Their first cause was an archetypal Man-Woman (*Androgyne*),

[1] Probably a *metempsychosis* is here referred to. The text of this hymn, however, is very corrupt, though the general meaning is fairly clear. 'Jesus,' of course, is properly the human recipient of the Saviour Æon of this Gnostic system. The *name* is probably a later interpolation.

as we have already seen, possessing a triad Personality, whose complete apprehension was a matter of higher *knowledge*, not of worship, or experience.

Furthermore, we do not know even approximately the date of this hymn. Professor W. B. Smith (*The Pre-Christian Jesus*) hazards the statement that it is 'old' (whatever that may mean)—'no one can say how old.' Professor Drews deftly alters this expression of opinion into, it is 'according to all appearance a pre-Christian hymn'[1] — a most unwarrantable deduction. All we really know about it is, that (*teste* Hippolytus) it was used *after* the time of Christ in this form. And the mere fact that these same Naasenes made use of St. Paul's Epistles, and the Fourth Gospel, certainly suggests that the semi-Christian flavour about their teaching was not derived from pre-Christian sources. If the sect actually did exist before Christ, in some form or other, there was nothing to prevent their subsequently absorbing certain peculiarly Christian ideas and terms, which could be incorporated into their system. And, even in the post-Christian form of their tenets, Jesus is not a *god* in any sense, but, strictly speaking, a mere human embodiment of one of the æons of the Pleroma, who (along with *Sophia*) comes to impart divine *knowledge* (γνῶσις) to mankind, a fact which is

[1] *Die Christusmythe*, 4th ed. p. 23.

destructive of any theory that they worshipped a *dying and reviving* saviour-god of any kind.[1]

Again, the *Nazarenes*, or *Nazoraes* (*Nαζαραῖοι*) were also—if Epiphanius is to be trusted[2]—in existence as a sect, in some form or other, before the time of Christ. And here Professor Drews embarks upon a still more doubtful theory of derivation and speculative construction. He says: "They were, however, called Nazoraes, because they honoured the mediator God, the Divine 'Son,' *as a Protector and Guardian* (Syr. *Naṣarya*; Heb. *Ha-nôsri* — cp. 'Protector of Israel'; also the fact that Mithras was honoured as 'Protector of the World'). According to Acts xxiv. 5, the first followers of Jesus were also called Nazoraes, or Nazarenes. The expressions 'Jesus' and 'Nazorean' [=Nazorœan] were, therefore, originally of almost like meaning, and by the addition of 'the Nazorean,' or 'Nazarene,' Jesus is not characterized as the man of Nazareth, as the Evangelists represent it, but as the Healer and Deliverer."[3]

[1] According to Theodoret, they sacrificed to the serpent (*προσκυνοῦσι τὸν ὄφιν*) whose presence consecrated their mystic feast.

But the 'serpent' seems to have been the symbol of *water*, the material basis of creation in the Ophite and other systems. It represented the world of organized, quickened and *intellectualized* matter. Therefore, their 'serpent'-worship would seem to have been nothing else than a veneration of the self-cognizant spirit of all life—symbolized under this form.

[2] *Hær.* xxix. 6.

[3] *The Christ Myth*, 3rd ed. p. 59. Italics ours.

Another argument for Professor Smith's theory —which forms the basis of Drews' hypothesis— that the Greek *Ναζωραῖος* (*Ναζαραῖος*) is connected with the Aramaic *Naṣaria*, and combines *Naṣar* and *Jah* (= Protector-, or Guardian-Jahveh), which, again, is to be equated with 'Jesus the Nazorean' (Nazarene), is derived from the Parisian Magic Papyrus.[1]

In this document, which is variously referred to the fourth and fifth centuries A.D. (Cheyne says that the date *may* be 'soon after A.D. 500'), there occur the following lines :—

(1549) ὁρκιζω σε κατα του μαρπαρκουριθ· νασααρι
(3119) ὁρκιζω σε κατα του Θεου των Ἑβραιων Ἰησου [Ἰαβαιαη].

νασααρι is identified with *Naṣaria* and made interchangeable with *του Θεου των Ἑβραιων Ἰησου*, the whole being taken to mean : "I conjure you by the Protector"—"I conjure you by Jesus, the God of the Hebrews," these being *formulæ* used in the exorcism of dæmons.

Now the word commonly rendered 'Nazarene' in the A.V., appears variously in the MSS. of the N.T. as *Ναζαρηνός*, *Ναζορηνός* and *Ναζωραῖος*, and is of obscure origin and doubtful spelling.

Without entering here into a detailed discussion as to the respective claims of the different variants which are found in the codices, we will point out that Professor Drews is in manifest error with

[1] Published by C. Wessely, Paris.

regard to his derivation of it from the stem *N.S.R.*, meaning 'Guardian,' 'Protector.' As Dr. Cheyne has clearly shown, in Hebrew 'the guardian' would be *ha-nozer—not ha-nôṣri*. He further points out that, "it is in the highest degree probable that Nazareth, or (better) some name which underlies this corrupt form, is an old synonym for *Gālīl*, *i.e.* Galilee. The name underlying Nazareth is clearly *Reṣin* (or Rezon). That, as I have said, would mean 'Galilee'; Galilean might be Rezoni (Rezonai). The people, however, according to its wont, transposed the letters to produce a more pleasing, or obvious, sense, and Nazareth (a 'place of shooting plants'), and Nazorai (Nazarene) were the results."[1]

With this view the Gospel evidence entirely agrees. When we have corrected the common readings, and made Jesus appear as '*the Nazorean*,' there are still *five* passages left in the Gospels[2] (also Acts x. 38), where *Ναζαρέθ* appears as a *place* of some kind. That the Evangelists were foolish enough to make—or had any ulterior motive in making—Jesus come from a place, which (as a *town*) was not in existence in their day, is in the highest degree improbable; for prophecy had pointed distinctly to *Bethlehem* (Mic. v. 2),[3] as

[1] *The Hibbert Journal*, July 1911, p. 892; see also April 1911, art. 'Judas Iscariot,' pp. 541, 542.

[2] Mark i. 9; Matt. ii. 23, xxi. 11; Luke ii. 4; John i. 45, 46.

[3] *i.e.* Bethlehem-Judah. There was, however, another Bethlehem

the place of origin of the Messiah. It is clear, therefore, that the term 'Nazareth' must be equivalent to Galilee, which would agree with tradition, and the designation *ὁ Ναζαραῖος* accordingly must mean 'the Galilean,' a name by which Jesus was, later on, commonly known, especially by pagan writers.[1] And the present-day Mohammedan designation of Christians as 'Nazarenes' is merely the equivalent of 'Galileans' (as the Emperor Julian always insisted upon their being called), *i.e.* the followers of the Prophet from Galilee.

Galilee was not, in Jewish eyes, productive of prophets, or, indeed, of men of either genius or eminence; hence the scornful question of Nathanael, 'Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?'[2] and, perhaps, the so-called prophecy, 'He shall be called a Nazorean,'[3] merely expressed a common popular belief in the northern part of Palestine that the Messiah would be (or would be called) a Galilean; in which case He may have been born in Bethlehem of Zebulon.

of Zebulon (Josh. xix. 15), now *Beit Laḥm*, seven miles north-west of the present town of Nazareth. In the Talmud it is termed צרייה, commonly regarded as a corruption for נצרייה, 'of Nazareth.' Can there have been any confusion, in Biblical times, between these two Bethlehems?

[1] Dr. Cheyne also notes (*Ency. Bibl.*, art. 'Joseph'), that the Aramaic *n'sar* (Heb. נָשַׂר) means 'to saw'; so that Jesus the *Nazarene* (Nasarene?) *might* possibly mean—or be taken to mean —'Jesus the Carpenter' (cp. Mark vi. 3).

[2] John i. 46. [3] Matt. ii. 23. No such prophecy exists in the O.T.

Consequently, there can be no thought of 'Guardian' or 'Protector'—much less that of 'Healer' or 'Deliverer'[1]—being implied in the name 'Jesus.' Here, again, therefore, the *cult-idea* is conspicuously absent.

Neither does the designation 'Nazorean,' as applied to Jesus, seem at all to imply the existence of a pre-Christian society of any kind. Epiphanius may have *thought* so, but, like so many of the Fathers, he was, no doubt, anxious to find everywhere pre-Christian recognitions of Jesus as the Messiah. Possibly, too, the (alleged) older Israelite belief in a future Messiah ben-Joseph *may* have become expressed about the time of Christ as meaning a Galilean Prophet, and the Nazoreans, in that case, *may* have been a kind of Galilean Messianic sect who were eagerly awaiting Him.[2] We cannot at present, however, decide these questions, owing to the imperfection of our information; but it seems, at any rate, perfectly clear that the *Nazaraios* was at least no ancient *cult-god*, and that no worship was at that time offered to such a deity.

[1] It is true that, from the time of the Maccabees onwards, the purely Greek name of *Jason* ('Healer' or 'Deliverer') was commonly regarded by Hellenized Jews as a rough equivalent of 'Joshua' (Jos. *Ant.* v. i.).

But there is no *etymological* connection, and the superficial identity is a mere surmise, probably based upon the ever-growing need, which the Jews of that age felt, for a national deliverer from Syria, in the first place, and afterwards from Rome.

[2] See Chap. IX. p. 212, note 4.

With regard to the testimony afforded by the Parisian Magic Papyrus, here again we have no evidence to indicate that the *formulæ* of exorcism are *pre*-Christian. It is, indeed, far more probable that the document (if really more ancient) was interpolated with the name 'Jesus' after the latter had gained repute as a word of *power* (cp. Acts iii. 6, iv. 10, etc.). Dr. Cheyne, in dealing with this question, says: "The next word Ἰαβαιαη seems to be a distorted form of the well-known Israelite God Yahwè."[1] And he further boldly adds: "The material is doubtless old, *i.e.* the cult of Jeshu (Jesus), or Jeshu-Yahwè, *possibly* existed among some circles of Jews in pre-Christian times."

But this is largely the merest speculation—absolutely without reputable evidence to back it, as Dr. Cheyne himself admits in the next paragraph, which we will summarize. "There is, however," he says, "for one practised in these inquiries, more safety in referring to the old Hebrew name Joshua (Jehoshua), whence admittedly comes the post-exilic form Jeshua."

And then, turning to the theory of Professor Drews, that Joshua means 'Saviour' (cp. Matt. i. 21), and that he was probably an Ephraimite form of the sun-god; also that his name conveys the idea of 'Healer' (so Epiphanius), and that it is connected with Jason, or Jasios, the mythical

[1] *The Hibbert Journal* (April 1911), p. 658.

name of a pupil of Chiron in the art of healing: "I am sorry to add," he remarks, "that almost every word of this is contrary to the present decisions of scholarship." He further rejects even the ordinary explanation of 'Joshua' as 'Jahveh-help,' and interprets the name as "a corruption of the second part of the cultual divine name Jahu-Ishma[el]."

Whether this latter theory be justifiable or not, it seems abundantly evident that (1), so far, no historic connection has been shown between the (hypothetical) Ephraimite sun-god 'Joshua' and 'Jesus, the Nazorean,' of both sacred and secular history; and (2) that the designation Nazorean has etymologically nothing to do with the words for 'Protector,' 'Guardian' and 'Deliverer' or 'Healer.'

The next Jewish sects with which we have still to deal, are the well-known *Essenes* and *Therapeutæ*. Of these we have fairly detailed accounts handed down, though the origins of both are involved in much obscurity. For information regarding the *Essenes* we are largely dependent upon Josephus.[1] They were apparently a kind of monastic community practising celibacy and a community of goods. Josephus says that they were found in many villages and even towns; but their headquarters appears to have been situated on the western shore of the Dead

[1] *B. J.* ii. 8; also *Ant.* XVIII. i. 5.

Sea. They renounced sacrifices and slavery, and had fixed rules for the initiation of proselytes, and a series of various grades of offices.

The actual tenets of the society were largely kept a profound secret. Outwardly, they offered prayer to the rising sun, as a symbol of Deity, worked till the fifth hour, when they bathed and assembled for a frugal meal. Then work was resumed until sunset, when they again met together for another repast. It is said that the stillness of the whole settlement impressed all strangers with a feeling of mysterious awe.

Similarly, in the case of the *Therapeutæ*, we find these recluses established in a colony of cells situated on the farther shore of Lake Mareotis in Egypt. According to the author of the *De Vitâ Contemplativa*,[1] they lived singly, men and women, in their separate cells, and gave themselves up almost entirely to prayer and meditation. Neander says that they interpreted the Scriptures allegorically, and had ancient theosophical writings in their possession. Probably they, too, like the *Essenes*, rejected the whole of the sacrificial *Torah*. They fasted much, and came together on the Sabbath (from reverence to the number *Seven*), when they held a solemn convocation, as also they did on one other day in every seven weeks. On this occasion, a simple love-feast was held, similar to the Christian

[1] ? Philo Judæus.

Agape, consisting of bread, salt and hyssop, after which mystic discourses were delivered, and hymns embodying old traditions sung. Like the Essenes, they held to the immortality of the soul, in some form, its future condition, in their view, being determined by the life spent previously upon earth.

It has been a favourite speculation with some writers to assert that the Essenes and Therapeutæ were identical, and formed really one brotherhood. This would seem to be at least doubtful. It is not improbable, however, that similar principles, and similar tendencies, may have given rise, about the same time, to two distinct, though in many respects similar, organizations, the one in Palestine, and the other in Egypt.

Now here we clearly have two systems—or possibly only one—of a *Quietist* type. Both Essenes and Therapeutæ, it would seem, believed that a knowledge of God, and thereby a true knowledge of self, was to be attained by the *intuitive* method, that is, by the exclusion of both sacrifices and conscious thought.

That they reverenced—still more that they worshipped any pre-Christian '*Jesus*,' there is not a tittle of evidence to show. Indeed, the contrary is much more probable, as we can judge from the tendencies of the various types of Quietism with which we are acquainted. The great aim of the Mystic has ever been that his spirit should

realize its union and identity with the Divine Spirit; and this is to be accomplished directly in meditation, rather than indirectly and mediately through sacrifice, or cultual worship.

Professor Drews, however, attempts to connect the *Essenes* with the *Jessaer*, taking advantage of the fact that Pliny terms the former *Essaei* (*Ἐσσαῖοι*);[1] he would argue that they were closely connected, if not absolutely identical, and that these *Jessaer*, again, were similarly connected with the *Nazaraioi* (Nazarenes).

But these identifications are, to say the least of them, extremely problematical. And even if they were shown to be identical, there is still no evidence of a '*Jesus-cult*' as any part of their system. We have, indeed, very little real knowledge of the innermost tenets of any of these societies, which makes it highly dangerous to speculate upon them. What we do know, however, certainly points in a very different direction, viz. towards either a vague and subjective Mysticism, or a Gnosticism, in which there was neither room nor need for a cult of dying solar or other heroes.[2]

[1] Josephus writes it *Ἐσσηνοί*.

[2] Professor Case says (*Am. Journ. of Theol.*, Jan. 1911): "That the main line of Judaism contained syncretistic elements is now generally recognized; but the perpetual and widespread existence of secret, polytheistic cults among the Jews is not supported by any substantial evidence."

CHAPTER VIII.

THE DYING AND RISING SAVIOURS OF ETHNIC NATURE-CULTS.[1]

We have now to deal briefly with a very old and widespread myth, which forms the basis of numerous ethnic nature-worships, frequently orgiastic in their character, and which, according to Professor Drews and some other writers, has been a very important factor in the origin and development of the 'Christ Myth.'

This ancient form of Nature-worship at one time prevailed almost universally throughout the countries of Western Asia and Egypt, as well as those of south-eastern Europe. As we have stated, it set forth in symbolic form primarily the annual outgrowth and subsequent death of vegetation, together with, in later times, the waning and waxing of the solar energy in autumn and spring respectively, under the figure of the birth and death of an anthropomorphic god, to whom various local names were given in the

[1] See the *Encyclopædia of Religion and Ethics*, under the various names, as available.

different countries in which the cult prevailed.[1] In Syria, for example, this god, representing the cosmic reproductive energy, was the so-called Adonis.[2]

The extant Greek version of the story of this Syrian deity relates that he was the lover of the goddess Aphrodite (Astarte), and was slain by the tusk of a wild boar when hunting in the mountains of Lebanon. The goddess afterwards lamented his death, and caused a red flower to grow up annually in spring out of his spilt blood.[3]

This plainly symbolic story, Macrobius tells us,[4] the Syrians interpreted to mean that the summer sun was, later in the year, slain by the gloom and frosts of winter; and also that his revival in the following spring was regarded as a 'victory over the first six zodiacal signs.' This statement would seem to indicate that Adonis was primarily a sun-god; but there can be little doubt, as Dr. Frazer has shown, that Adonis was, in his origin, a vegetation spirit, and was only at a later period identified with the spirit conceived as manifesting itself in the waxing and waning of the sun's power throughout the year.

[1] Dr. Frazer in his *Dying God*, and *Adonis*, *Attis*, *Osiris*, traces the origin of this cult at great length.

[2] Heb. *Tammuz* (cp. Jer. xxii. 18, xxxiv. 5; Ezek. viii. 14). His real Syrian name is unknown. The Greeks, who heard the Syrians lamenting his death and addressing him as 'Adoni' ('My Lord'), mistook this word for a proper name, and called him Adonis. See Plut. *De. Is. et Osir*, 5; Lucian, *De Syr. Deâ*, 7; Apollodor, ii. 1. 3, 7, iii. 14. 3, 4.

[3] Ovid, *Metam.* x. 503 ff.

[4] *Saturnalia*, i. 21; cp. Sayce, *Hibb. Lects.* (1887), Lect. iv.

In Phrygia this same god, as representing the reproductive powers that are hidden in Nature, and especially those regarded as resident in the soil of the earth, was named *Attis*.[1]

It is from Egypt, however, that what is, perhaps, the most developed version of the general myth comes. In the very early days of its history, the Semitic conquerors brought with them from Asia the story of *Aśari*, who was one of the sons of *Eâ*, the Accadian ocean-deity and culture-god of Babylonia.[2] This god, known long afterwards to the Greek conquerors of Egypt as *Osiris* (Egypt, *Ausar*), was later identified largely with the sun, which was 'born' and 'died' annually, and also daily.[3]

To summarize: Osiris was eventually conceived by the Egyptians as being engaged in perpetual strife with his brother (or *son*, in some versions of the myth) Set. These two deities were ultimately regarded as two antagonistic principles of light and darkness respectively, and, in a moral sense, of good and evil. In their yearly (and daily) contest, Osiris was ultimately (but only for

[1] Also written Atys, Attin, and in variant, Agdistis.

[2] Aśari (Accad. *Aśari-uru-dugu*, 'the god whose word was creative'), the Merodach (Marduk) of the Semites, and another form of the same deity.

[3] While Frazer regards Osiris as originally a corn- or tree-spirit, Sayce believes that he was an actual man. His deification is, in that case, an instance of Euhemerism and confusion with an older ethnic myth (see Sayce, *Religions of Ancient Egypt and Babylonia*, p. 123).

a time) vanquished, and his body was said to have been cut in pieces by Set, and submerged in the waters of the Nile. His red blood was recognized in the ruddy glow seen in the clouds, and on the western waters at sunset.

But his sister-wife Isis (Egypt. *Ȧuset*), helped by Nephthys, collected the pieces of his body, and put them together again. Thereafter Osiris reappeared daily and yearly, in renewed splendour, as the youthful sun *Horus*, who was the fruit of the union of Osiris and Isis. The body of the slain Osiris was said to be preserved as a mummy at Heliopolis, while Osiris himself remained below the earth as god and king of the underworld of the dead (*Ȧmentet*).[1]

In the so-called *Book of the Dead*, in the hymn to the setting sun,[2] that luminary is clearly identified with Osiris: "Thou shinest there with thy beams, O thou great god Osiris, the everlasting prince. The lords of the zones of the *Ṭuat* (Underworld) in their caverns stretch out their hands in adoration before thy *ka* (double), and they cry out to thee, and they all come forth in the train of thy form shining brilliantly. The hearts of the lords of the Ṭuat are glad when thou sendest forth thy glorious light in Ȧmentet; their two eyes are directed towards thee, and their hearts rejoice when they see thee."

[1] Cp. Plutarch, *De Is. et Osir*, 13–21.

[2] Chap. xvi., Budge's tr. vol. i. pp. 87, 88.

In Babylonia this same deity also appears under the name *Dumuzu*, which, according to Sayce,[1] is probably derived from the Accadian *Dumu-zi-apsu*, 'son of the Life of the Deep,' *i.e.* of Eâ, as god of the primeval ocean, the source of all living things. He too dies in the fall of the year, and Istar, his sister-wife, goes down to the world of the dead to find and bring him back to light and life, as we are told in the story of the 'Descent of Istar.'

In each of these forms of the primitive vegetation-myth, often amalgamated (or confused) with the later concept of a solar spirit, the god was ceremonially lamented[2] as dying at some period

[1] See *The Old Test. in the Light of the Historical Records and Legends of Assyria and Babylonia.* The Babylonian 'Redeemer-god,' Marduk, is more analogous, in certain of his aspects, to the Jewish Messiah.

[2] The following 'Lament,' in Greek hexameters, is said to have been sung, at a festival celebrated by Queen Arsinoë, daughter of Berenice. (See Ahrens' *Bucolici Graeci*, sub Bionis reliq.).

> Αἰάζω τὸν Ἄδωνιν· ἀπώλετο καλὸς Ἄδωνις
> Ὤλετο καλὸς Ἄδωνις, ἐπιάζουσιν Ἔρωτες.
> Αἴ, Αἴ, τὰν Κυθέραιαν· ἀπώλετο καλὸς Ἄδωνις,
> Αὐτὰν τὰν Κυθέραιαν· ἐπαιάζουσιν Ἔρωτες.

At this magnificent spectacle a statue of the young lover, represented as dying at the age of about nineteen years, was placed on a couch, under a canopy made of velvet, and splendidly adorned, in the arms of Aphrodite.

The next day, when he was supposed to be dead, the statue was carried by the women to the seashore, where its 'wounds' were washed. Then the women, with dishevelled hair, and their robes ungirt and bosoms bared, broke forth into the above lament.

According to Aristophanes, these festivals were scenes of great immorality, and the same charge is repeated by other writers, with regard to the celebrations elsewhere.

of the year, though the time varied with the climate and circumstances of the country. In Babylonia and the hotter countries of the East, the fierce summer heats which burnt up the vegetation were regarded as the foe of the god. In the mountains of Syria, on the other hand, his enemy was the frosts of winter, which synchronized with the time of the winter-solstice, when the sun 'dies down' for a time; but, like the vegetation, does so only to be reborn shortly afterwards. These and similar instances serve to show how the older idea of the vegetative character of the god was being gradually more or less supplanted, in some countries at least, by his later identification with the spirit manifesting itself as solar energy.

But, before proceeding to discuss the question of the alleged connection of this somewhat complex myth with Christian origins, we have another, and even more important form of solar deity to consider.

Mithra[1] (or Mithras), was a god of the early Aryan pastoral tribes inhabiting chiefly the modern Persia. His name, as *Mitra* ('friend'), is found in the hymns of the Rig-Veda, perhaps the oldest extant records of the Aryan races.[2] Here he is associated with the Vedic *Varuṇa* (Gk. *Οὔρανος*), the two gods denoting respectively the heaven of day and the heaven of night.

[1] See Lagarde, *Recherches sur le Culte de Mithras.*

[2] See Muir, *Original Sanskrit Texts*, 5, 58–76.

In the old Persian religion, as developed by Zarathustra, Mithra was retained as the senior god of a divine triad, and later, when the Persians conquered Assyria and Babylonia, the cult of Mithra became more and more important; for he was identified with the sun as the Divine Being, and worshipped through the medium of an elaborate ritual, while a system of *Mysteries*, which had some superficial resemblance to the Christian Sacraments, was introduced, thus changing an originally subordinate god of *light* into the higher Deity of goodness and knowledge.

In these Mysteries we find the germ of the subsequently developed Gnostic psychology, viz. that the pre-existing soul of man has undergone a separation from God, its divine source and final goal, and has descended to earth, from which it endeavours to ascend again to heaven, and to become reunited with the Godhead, largely by means of the discipline of occult knowledge, aided in some degree by penance and fasting. In the later Mithraism this process of reunion with God is aided by the work of Mithra himself.[1]

In ancient statuary Mithra is represented as a young man with a Phrygian cap upon his head, kneeling upon a prostrate bull, one of the horns

[1] It is important to bear in mind that there are no Mithraic *Scriptures* extant, and that our very imperfect knowledge of Mithraism is almost wholly derived from Cumont's *Textes et Monuments Figurés relatifs aux Mysteres de Mithra* (1899–1906) the standard work upon the subject.

of which he holds with his left hand, while with the right hand he plunges a dagger into the animal's neck.

The more developed and later forms of Mithra-worship and doctrine were introduced into Rome soon after the fall of the Republic, and speedily became a very popular cult, especially amongst the soldiery of the earlier Empire.

Let us now examine, as fully as is here possible, the supposed indebtedness of Christianity to the *ideas* contained in these various primitive vegetative and solar cults.

And, in the first place, Dr. Frazer says,[1] with regard to Agdistis (who is really a mere double of Attis): "His mother Nana was a virgin, who conceived by putting a ripe plum, or pomegranate, into her bosom." There are, however, several other versions of his birth, one of which makes him the offspring of Zeus and a large rock, and which further says that he was the *father* of Attis.

But, setting these variant, and in a sense unimportant, details aside, we find the account of his mother's conception, above referred to, often put forward as an example of a parthenogenetic birth-myth,[2] which is straightway compared with the Birth-stories of Jesus that are found in two

[1] *Adonis, Attis, Osiris*, p. 219.

[2] Many other examples are given by Mr. Hartland in his *Legend of Perseus*, vol. i., 'The Supernatural Birth,' *passim*.

of the Synoptic Gospels. We are not here directly concerned with the latter, or the question of their historic value; but we would point out that the conception of Agdistis, as here related, is in no strict sense, like the conception of Jesus, a parthenogenetic one, in the true meaning of that term. The almond, or pomegranate, is an Oriental symbol for a very unsavoury concept, setting forth a method of conception of (in a sense) a natural kind, but one which is brought about by unnatural and indescribable means.[1]

Neither, if we may trust Arnobius, did the original myth tell of an actual *resurrection* of Attis (or Agdistis) to a new life. Agdistis, he says, begged of Zeus that he would restore the body of Attis to life. But this Zeus refused to do; he only consented that it should remain undecayed, and that the *hair* should continue to grow upon it. Here we obviously have an instance of a purely vegetative myth, the ever-growing hair of Attis representing the various plants that continue, in some countries, to spring from the soil of the earth, even during the winter

[1] Arnobius relates (*Adv. Gentes*, v.) how Agdistis *emasculated* himself; he then proceeds: "Cum discidio partium sanguis fluit immensus. Rapiuntur et contribuuntur hæc terra. Malum repente cum pomis *ex his* punicum nascitur, cujus Nana speciem contemplata . . . carpit mirans, atque in sinu reponit. *Fit ex eo prægnans.*"

It is palpably absurd to compare—as so many writers now do—such unsavoury stories as this with the Gospel Birth narratives

season.[1] The introduction of an anthropomorphic 'resurrection' element into the Attis myth (if one were really ever brought in) is, therefore, a much later addition, and would date, not improbably, from post-Christian times. Similarly, too, with the so-called 'resurrection' of Adonis: Lucian tells us[2] that on the day after Adonis 'died' at the festival, "they say mythically (*i.e.* pretend) that he is alive, and send him into the air." Now it is quite plain—to some persons at least—that there is here no idea corresponding to that of a resurrection in the true sense of that abused word—as it is set forth, for example, in the four Gospels. Indeed, the only return to life of the Adonis (portrayed as a youth) consisted in the springing up of a flower from his spilt blood to mark the spot where he was slain,—possibly a crude attempt to depict the idea that last year's solar energy reappears next year, partially as vegetative life. But this is mere speculation.

Again, the mere fact that Adonis 'died' and 'rose' *annually* suggests that there was no parallel whatever with the death and resurrection of Jesus, which are stated to have occurred but once. The former events represented mythically certain natural phenomena, and, therefore, the

whatever historic value the latter may, or may not, have, because the fundamental ideas in each are totally different.

[1] C.p. the old Norse myth of *Ymir*.

[2] *De Syr. Deâ*, 6: μετὰ δὲ τῇ ἑτερῇ ζώειν τέ μιν μυθολογέουσι καὶ ἐς τὸν ἠέρα πέμπουσι.

annual ceremony was a symbolical *explanation* of an annual process. The festival of the Resurrection of Jesus, on the other hand, was a *commemoration* of an event which did not recur.

The two 'resurrections,' in short, belong to two entirely different categories of thought, and are, consequently, not comparable; and even if it were shown that we must regard the Resurrection of Jesus as unhistorical, the story of it bears no resemblance whatever to that of Adonis. We have, in fact—in these 'births' and 'resurrections'—quite different concepts at work. In the one the concept is largely *material* and *unethical*, and professes to depict to us the working of earthly phenomena; in the other the concept is purely *spiritual* and *ethical*, and is intended to lead us on to the contemplation and understanding of the realities of a higher form of existence.

Again, in the mythic story of *Dusāres*, the North Arabian equivalent for Tammuz and Adonis, etc., Dr. Cheyne, relying upon the authority of Epiphanius,[1] lays great stress upon a statement made by him that this god was worshipped as 'the only-begotten of the Lord' (μονογενὴς τοῦ Δεσπότου), while his mother was similarly adored as the 'Virgin' (παρθένος, κόρη).

[1] *Hær.* li. Surely an untrustworthy authority! This peevish and marvel-mongering old pedant, like some others of the Fathers, in order to confirm Christian doctrine, was on the look out for 'virgins' everywhere. See also *Bible Problems*, p. 74.

But setting aside such minor points as the equating of Δεσπότης with *Κύριος* (as applied to the Jewish Jahveh), which we believe to be quite illegitimate, we very much doubt whether the word *παρθένος*, in the minds of the devotees of the Dusares cult (and similar cults) meant at all what it implied in the language of the Evangelists.[1] And, indeed, Dr. Cheyne practically admits this:[2] "And what was the original meaning of the term 'virgin'? As has long since been shown, it expressed the fact that the great mythic mother-goddess was *independent of the marriage tie.* In those remote times" — he continues, quoting Barton's *Semitic Origins* (1902), p. 84—"to which the cult of that goddess properly belonged, 'the mother held the chief place in the clan, and all women shared a measure of free love.'" Precisely so; the one class of stories are all more or less obscene; the New Testament narratives, on the other hand, are not, as may be seen by a careful comparison.

For the mythic stories of the pagans all relate (or imply) the visit, in corporeal person, of some anthropomorphic god to the lady in question, or else the actual *semina vitæ* of the god are thought of as being conveyed to their destination in some physical, but abnormal and extravagant manner.

[1] See also *A Critical Examination of the Evidences for the Doctrine of the Virgin Birth*, pp. 12–14, 34–36, 42–43, 48–49.

[2] *Bible Problems*, p. 75. Italics ours.

In the Christian narratives, however, there is not a trace of this. It is the *Holy Spirit* (τὸ Πνεῦμα) which 'comes upon' the Virgin, *i.e.* the *power* (Δύναμις) of the 'Most High' that 'overshadows her.' It is throughout a wholly immaterial process. There is, therefore, as the careful reader will readily see, a different *idea* underlying it, inasmuch as there is a total absence of the objective *carnal* element, which is always found, directly or indirectly expressed, in these old nature-myths and folk-stories. Hence, we may legitimately infer that the New Testament story (from whatever sources it originated) could not arise out of any idea derived from them. The New Testament story may not relate an historic fact (in our modern sense of the term); it may be merely a symbolical reference to some higher spiritual truth with which we are at present unfamiliar. But, at any rate, whichever may be the meaning, we feel confident that it is not a derivative of any of these old myths. It is quite wanting in the immoral (or, 'unmoral') quality found universally in the ancient myth, in which there is invariably, as Dr. Cheyne euphemistically puts it, an entire 'independence of the marriage tie' in the most literal sense of the term.

As regards the 'resurrection' of the Babylonian form of this deity, Dr. Cheyne remarks:[1] "The

[1] *Bible Problems*, p. 119. Marduk here is practically another form of *Asari*, the two gods being somewhat confused. The early

Babylonian deity of the spring-tide sun (Marduk), who died, also rose again; his chief festival went by the name of the 'standing-up' (*tabû*)." But when we come to inquire closely into this matter, we find that the myth of his 'resurrection' is merely *inferred* from the fact that his grave was *said* to have been shown in Babylonia, while the term 'standing-up' refers to Marduk's rebirth shortly after the winter-solstice. And, as regards his old Accadian title, 'the god who raises the dead to life,' the term has probably no reference whatever to a *resurrection* of mankind, but means that the spirit of the dead man, through the intercession and help of Marduk, will be allowed to drink of 'the waters of life' that bubbled up in the underworld beneath the golden throne of the spirits of the earth, and then ascend to the old Accadian heaven, 'the land of the silver sky.'

Similarly, in the case of Osiris, we find the myth finally reduced to such a state of confusion and 'unmorality' that he, as identified with Horus, at last becomes the son of his own wife! This statement is, no doubt, intended to set forth some nature-teaching or other, as probably most of these old myths do. But we must at the same time remember how these *ideas* reflect the 'unmoral' conditions of the age. What is merely figurative and symbolical with 'higher spirits' in

Christians noticed the (imperfect) analogy in nature, and used it as an *illustration*.

the case of the multitude, is an index of the average moral state. Hence these nature-cults are *always* remarkable for the fact that they indicate a low moral tone in the races amongst whom they are found. This, however, has not been the case where the Christian Birth story has prevailed. Its influence has been rather exhibited in the promotion of an exaggerated estimate of the value of celibacy.

Again, it is very generally held that in the story of Osiris we have a 'resurrection-myth' strictly parallel to that of Jesus. But Osiris certainly cannot be said to 'rise again,' for he is distinctly stated to have remained below the earth after death. From being a god of the living, he becomes a god of the underworld, as king over the dead.[1] It is true that, in the fuller form of the myth, his body is said to have been pieced together again by Isis; but this is only that it may continue as a mummy upon earth. To the Egyptian popular mind it was as incomprehensible that a god should not have a 'fleshly tabernacle,' as that a man should ever be complete without that accessory being in existence somewhere, even when he was dwelling among the spirits of the dead. The actual reappearance of Osiris upon earth, accordingly, is only in the

[1] This has been equated with the 'decension' of Jesus to Hades after His death. But both the *motifs* and details of the two stories are quite different. See Chap. XI. pp. 274, 275.

form of his son Horus, who is ever the new sun-god of the next day, a concept which may be paralleled in human life by the thought that in this world a man lives on in the person of his son, the only kind of immortality which is (in the view of some) possible for man.

But, it may be objected here, it was through the suffering and death of Osiris that the Egyptian hoped that his body might hereafter rise again, in a transformed and glorious and incorruptible shape; and, therefore, the devotee appealed in prayer for eternal life to him who had conquered death, and become the king of the underworld. Moreover, Osiris was thought of as a very human god, and the confession put into the mouth of the dead man[1] when standing before the judgment throne of Osiris, and the forty-two assessors shows the high morality of the Osirian faith. The dead man was called upon to show reason why he should be admitted to the fields of *Alu*, and to prove that he had consistently abstained from evil-doing. There is much truth in this contention. The Egyptian seems, from the later texts, to have gradually developed the idea of the resurrection of a spiritual as opposed to the resuscitation of the material body. Thus Dr. Budge says:[2] "All the available evidence shows that the Egyptians of dynastic

[1] Budge, *Book of the Dead* (Papyrus of Ani), chap. cxxv.

[2] *The Book of the Dead*, Introduction, pp. lvii–lviii.

times mummified the dead body, because they believed that a spiritual body would germinate, or develop itself, from it." This, so far, agrees with St. Paul's teaching that the *psychical* body (σῶμα ψυχικόν) would be transmuted into a *spiritual body* (σῶμα πνευματικόν) at the Resurrection; for 'flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God.'[1]

But there is an important difference here. The Osirians seem to have thought that this change could not proceed unless the former material body was still undissolved—hence the practice of mummification; whereas St. Paul teaches that where the old body was dispersed into its elements, and otherwise appropriated, the spirit (τὸ πνεῦμα) could develop a fresh body of a spiritual type, which would be an identifiable *replica* of the former material body—a much profounder and wider concept than that of the Egyptians.

Again, the Egyptian resurrection was, in another respect also, a mere partial affair. A man might well be unable to endure the tests of the tribunal of Osiris and the forty-two assessors. In this case, and "for such a man no re-edification and no resurrection was possible. The immortal elements were divine, and by nature pure and imperishable; but they could be preserved from

[1] See 1 Cor. xv. 50. The whole chapter, indeed, is deserving of careful and intelligent study, especially vers. 35–54.

entering Osiris, from re-entering the hull of the man who had proved himself unworthy of them. The soul, indeed, as such, did not die, although *personal annihilation* was the lot of the evil-doer in whom it had dwelt."[1]

The Christian teaching, on the other hand, is that *all* 'rise,' and are either admitted into 'life,' or condemned to the 'æonian fire' (*τὸ πῦρ τὸ αἰώνιον*)—a symbolic term implying a spiritual *purification* of a permanent personality. Thus, in the Osirian eschatology, sin is punished by the loss of personality, and consequent practical annihilation; in the Christian, by a process of agelong[2] purgation—a concept of much higher ethical value. Indeed, while there are many resemblances between the later Egyptian and the Christian teaching, there are also great and fundamental differences, which tell greatly against any hypothesis of derivation from each other, or from a common source.

We must, however, in any case, allow that of all the various nature-cults, that of Osiris was not only the most developed, but without doubt the best and purest. But, even here, its ethical teaching is infinitely below that of the Christian religion. It is purely *negative* in its character: the soul,

[1] *The Ancient Egyptian Doctrine of the Immortality of the Soul*, Wiedmann, pp. 55, 56. Italics ours.

[2] It is, perhaps, still necessary to point out that *αἰώνιος* does not mean 'everlasting,' 'eternal,' in the ordinary sense.

at the bar of judgment, urges, 'I have *not* done' so and so. This is, in effect, its whole keynote throughout. It will, therefore, be profitable to compare this—in many respects beautiful though merely *negative*—confession with the teaching of Jesus, as expressed in, *e.g.*, the *Beatitudes*, and especially in such passages as Matt. xxv. 34–40, and Mark viii. 34 (Luke ix. 23), where the Christian qualifications for the Blessed State are definitely formulated in *positive* terms. In the latter it is not simply a question of what 'I have *not* done,' it is how far 'I *have*' fulfilled the Law of Christ—the 'New Commandment,' as He termed it.

But it must be allowed that, at times, the Egyptians did manage to rise to some degree above these mere negative conceptions. In the Pyramid texts, and in tombs, we find occasionally such statements as these: "I loved my father; I honoured my mother, . . . and when a famine arose, lasting for many years, I distributed corn to the needy." But these are exceptions to the rule; and even the Osirian faith cannot show such a steady record for over eighteen hundred years, of the *positive* virtues as are recorded in the annals of Christianity. Its *standard*, when all is said and done, remains negative throughout, and if a few here and there rose superior to that standard, it was rather in spite of their religion than because of it. It is, in short, admirable in theory, and up to a certain point; but nothing more. It is in

Christianity alone that we find the 'last word' regarding the 'whole duty of man,' and that duty is lifted by it infinitely above the level of even the best and highest Osirian view.

It still remains to deal with the Mithra-cult. Now we must remember that the actual Mithra-myth has been lost, and, therefore, that it can now be reconstructed only tentatively from the scenes depicted on the stone reliefs. But in spite of this, Mr. J. M. Robertson confidently informs us[1] that Mithra was "supernaturally born of a virgin mother, and of the Most High God." This, he asserts, was admitted by certain Christian bishops of Armenia, in the fourth and fifth centuries of the Christian era. He refers here to the reply which these prelates gave to the attack of the Persian viceroy, Mihr Nerseh, upon Christianity, recorded by the Armenian historian Elisæus.[2] Let us, therefore, turn to this work, and see exactly what they said.

There are two references in it bearing upon the birth of Mithra. In one we are told that "the god Mithra was born of *a woman*";[3] in the other it is said that "the god Mithra is incestuously born of a *mortal mother*."[4]

[1] *Pagan Christs*, p. 339.

[2] *Concerning the Vardans and the Armenian War*, bk. ii. pp. 53–57.

[3] *Mihr astouads i knochē.*

[4] *Mihr astouads mairadsin ē i mardkanē.* I am indebted to Dr. St. Clair Tisdall for these two quotations and translation.

From these statements we can gather nothing whatever about 'a virgin birth.' Neither do we find any allusion to such a thing elsewhere, not even in the recent *Eine Mithrasliturgie* of Dietrich.[1] As a matter of fact, the extant Mithraic sculptures represent him as issuing from a rock at his *birth* (not resurrection); by which is possibly meant the earth as the all-producing mother. Dr. St. Clair Tisdall, however, thinks that, since the Avestic *asman* (Vedic Sanskṛ. *ašman*) means, besides 'rock,' 'cloud' and 'sky,' the reference here really is to Mithra (the sun) as a child of the sky, which is very probable.

In like manner he explains the struggle of Mithra with the 'bull,' which has caused some modern writers to style Mithra 'a suffering Saviour.' The Avestic word *gāus*, in addition to meaning 'bull,' 'cow,' is also translatable 'earth'; and since the Avestic word *urvan* ('soul') is probably a derivative of the same root as *urvarā* ('plant,' 'tree'), the symbolic representation of the sculpture really means that the sun, piercing the earth with his rays (the dagger), causes the vegetation to spring up—another instance of an old vegetative myth combining in later times with a solar one.[2]

[1] Leipzig, 1903.

[2] See *Mythic Christ and True*, pp. 19, 20. Professor Drews explains it (*The Christ Myth*, p. 142) thus: Before 800 B.C., the sun, in the shape of the constellation of the Bull, opened the spring and released the world from the power of winter.

An old Persian belief (perhaps Mithraic) was that, at the end of all things, Mithra will kill another 'bull,' and, mixing its fat with wine, will give it to his worshippers to drink, and by so doing will confer immortality upon them. Mr. J. M. Robertson appears to see in this a source of the Eucharist and the Christian concept of immortality. But it is impossible to find any such connection here. Neither is there any reference in ancient Persian tradition to a *burial* in, or a *resurrection* from, a rock-tomb, as Mr. Robertson's exuberant fancy has imagined. Mithra springs from the 'rock' at *birth*, as we have seen, not after death. In short, the 'parallel' between Jesus and Mithra is of the very vaguest description — if, indeed, we may speak of a parallel at all. The story of the latter, as is the case with all the other sun- and vegetation-gods, is utterly unlike that of the former, and neither story can be said to be derivable from the other.

We cannot conclude this chapter better than with a quotation from Dr. St. Clair Tisdall's work[1] already quoted, which bears directly upon the question under consideration: "The religion of Mithra, which deified the Cæsars, permitted its professors to fraternize with the worshippers of Anaïtis, Cybelē, Jupiter and Baal, and to adore these and other deities, bathed its devotees in

[1] Pp. 22, 23.

bull's blood, and feigned, if it did not practise, ritual-murder at the initiation of its neophytes, cannot by any process of reasoning be identified with the faith which sternly condemned each and every one of these practices, and whose professors died by the extremity of agonizing torture rather than sprinkle a pinch of incense on the fire burning before Cæsar's statue. But the study of Mithraism is valuable because it enables us to see what Christianity *would have been* had it originated in the worship of the sun. The rise, progress and downfall of Mithraism show us also how great is man's felt need of a Saviour, and how utterly insufficient to satisfy it was such a 'pagan Christ' as Mithra, who was not incarnated, who neither suffered nor died, nor rose again for men, and was held to be the intermediary between the Spirit of Good and the Spirit of Evil."

A similar verdict must be pronounced in the case of each and all of these nature-cults. With the solitary exception of the cult of Osiris, which was partly ethicized, they were totally void of all ethical, and—in its true sense—*spiritual* elements. They are, accordingly, in no sense comparable with the religion of Jesus, and their mythical 'Saviours' in each case bear no real resemblance to Him. The *idea* underlying the nature-cult, and the *idea* underlying Christianity, are wholly different, and cannot be equated and brought into any true connection with each other.

CHAPTER IX.

MYTHOLOGY AND THE GOSPELS.

The attempt to mythologize the whole of the contents of the four Gospels had been attempted in England by Mr. J. M. Robertson nearly ten years before the issue of Professor Drews' book. As the latter builds his theory largely upon the methods and results of Mr. Robertson's research, it will be necessary to examine in some detail, in this and the two following chapters, the processes by which the latter writer in particular arrives at his conclusions. And we may conveniently preface this inquiry by a quotation from his chief work,[1] which expresses in a summarized form his general views.

"The whole of Mr. Frazer's investigation,"[2] he says, leads up, though unavowedly, to the recognition of the crucified Jesus as the annual slain vegetation-god on the Sacred Tree.

"But Jesus is buried in a rock-tomb,[3] as is

[1] *Christianity and Mythology*, p. 37.
[2] Referring to *Adonis, Attis, Osiris*, etc.
[3] See Chap. VIII. p. 202.

Mithra, the rock-born sun-god, and it is as sun-god that he is born at the winter-solstice;[1] it is as sun-god (though also as carrying over the administrative machinery of the Jewish Patriarch) that he is surrounded by Twelve Disciples; it is as sun-god that, like Osiris, he is to judge men after death—a thing not done by Adonis or Attis; it is as sun-god, passing through the zodiac, that he is represented successively in art and lore by the Lamb and the Fishes;[2] and it is as sun-god that he enters Jerusalem before his death on two asses[3]—the Ass and the Foal of the Greek sign of Cancer (the turning-point in the sun's course)—on which Dionysus also rides. The Christ-cult, in short, was a synthesis of the two most popular myth-motives, with some Judaic elements as nucleus, and some explicit ethical teaching superadded."

It will be impossible here, within our necessary limits of space, to do more than deal with a selected number of the chief events in the life and career of Our Lord, which Mr. Robertson and (largely following his method) Professor Drews have mythologized, in accordance with their preconceived ideas as to the non-historical character of the Founder of Christianity. These selected instances, however, we will set forth below in separate sections as samples of the

[1] See p. 222. [2] See Chap. XII. pp. 283–89.
[3] See Chap. X. pp. 235 ff.

general methods which are employed by both writers.

1. The Three Marys.[1]

A very important and fundamental point in the mythical theory of Mr. Robertson is the equating of the names Mary (Mariam), Myrrha, Maia and Māyā.

That is to say, it is gravely maintained by him that Mary, as the mother of Jesus (and also of the mythical (?) 'Joshua'), Myrrha, as the mother of Adonis, Maia, as the mother of Hermes, the messenger of the Greek gods, and Māyā, as the mother of Gautama the Buddha, are merely variant forms of the universal name of the great Divine Mother recognized in all the ethnic nature-myths. And it would, of course, naturally follow from this, that Jesus, Adonis, Hermes and even Gautama the Buddha were also variant forms of the mythical Divine Saviour, who was said to have been born of this nature-goddess, though this latter conclusion has not the support of similar personal names.

But what are the chief grounds upon which the former identifications are based? In the first place there is the alliterative assonance of the four female names—Mary, Myrrha, Maia and Māyā, so tempting to the man with an *a priori* theory in his mind. But this similarity in sound—really

[1] *Christianity and Mythology*, pp. 319 ff.

very superficial—in itself proves nothing, and does not even render the alleged connection probable. If there really be any such relationship, as Mr. Robertson tries to make out with the help of these names, it must be a deeper one ; it must lie, *e.g.* in some etymological affinity between them, which results in all expressing a common underlying mythological *idea*. Let us apply this touchstone to the theory, and see what results we get.

Let us take first the Jewish name Mariam. Dr. Cook says :[1] "There are but two alternative roots that can be seriously considered : מרת 'to be rebellious,' and מרא, 'to be fat.' The א of the מרא might, before the *a* of -ām, pass into י, which, in the case of מרה, is already the third consonant. The termination *-ām* indicates substantives of an abstract meaning as well as adjectives, and is especially common in the case of proper names. Mariam, then, might mean either 'the rebellious'[2] or 'the corpulent.'" He finally decides in favour of the latter derivation as according "excellently with the whole analogy of Semitic names ; it is associated with the Semitic idea of beauty."

The name Myrrha, on the other hand, is a mere variant form of *Smyrna* (*Σμύρνα*), the Arabian myrtle tree, which possesses a balsamic juice. The myth says that, for committing an unnatural

[1] *Ency. Bib.*, art. 'Mary.' [2] Cp. Num. xii. 1–15.

offence, Myrrha was pursued by her father, who endeavoured to kill her. But she prayed the gods to make her invisible, and they, moved to pity, changed her into the evergreen myrtle. And, after the lapse of nine months, the tree burst open and Adonis was born.

Again, in the case of Maia (or Maias), we have an obvious derivation from $\sqrt{ma}$, which was no doubt originally suggested by the frequent use of that syllable by infants to their mothers, and on that account it had attached to it the meaning of 'one who brings forth.'

Similarly in Sanskrit we have also a $\sqrt{ma}$, in the sense of 'to bring forth,' 'produce,' with *mātṛi*, 'a mother,' and *māyā*, 'illusion,' as applied to the material universe, which is regarded by Vedantists as a mere illusive product of the senses.

Now in these four names there does not appear to be the slightest reference to some common goddess. 'The bringer-forth' is a term which may be applied to all women in its plain natural sense, without any recondite or occult meaning whatever; hence we may very properly choose the simpler and more direct explanation rather than the remoter and more obscure one. Furthermore, and above all, there is no etymological connection between the Aryan root *ma* and the Hebrew מרא: the meanings are totally different, and, therefore, we have absolutely no grounds for equating them.

Again, Mr. Robertson, very gratuitously and upon the slenderest possible grounds, regards these three 'mythic Marys' of the Gospel story as mere 'figures in a ritual lamentation.' Because Adonis was ceremoniously 'wept for' by women, therefore the equally 'mythical' Jesus was lamented in His death by *mythical* women! But this statement, again, in any case proves nothing. Is not mourning for the beloved dead the peculiar office of women all the world over in daily life? And what more probable—nay, certain—than that the gentle Rabbi from Galilee should attract the pure and disinterested ministrations and love of a few devoted women?

Mary (Miriam) was, as we all knew, a very common and popular name amongst both the Hebrews and later Jews, a fact no doubt largely due to the traditional exploits of the sister of Moses. We have as many as *six* Marys mentioned in the New Testament—certainly not all figures in any ritual lamentation. Moreover, early Christian records contain no references to any annual ceremonious lamentations comparable with those for Adonis or Osiris. We, therefore, see no need for supposing that the more prominent *trio* were mere 'figures.' That they are not otherwise conspicuous in the story need excite no surprise. In the East, the home is still exclusively the woman's sphere of activity, and if she steps outside it is not with a view

to achieve public notoriety. No doubt it is easy to draw a parallel of a sort between the women who ministered to Jesus, and the hysterical creatures who yearly, in a dramatic manner, bewailed the 'slain Adonis'; but the comparison is merely a superficial one, and based solely upon the common emotions of humanity. There is no *real* identity; the pagan mourning is clearly theatrical: the Christian mourning is not; it appeals to us with all those marks of reality and genuineness which it is impossible to simulate.

Another point of difference may here be noted. The mangled body of the slain Osiris was said to be found again by Isis, and that of Adonis—as an *image* of the god—by the Syrian women. The body of Jesus, on the other hand, is not found in its tomb by any of the women, or by the disciples—a significant point of difference.

Furthermore, no heathen cult ever reached the full concept of a *spiritual* body.[1] In the resurrection, or, more properly speaking, the *rebirth*, of the pagan God, he reappears annually (for the most part) in the same material guise as before—the sun in the heavens, or the plant which springs from the earth; whereas the resurrection body of Jesus is not conceived as material in its nature. The whole concept of the pagan cults, therefore,

[1] The cult of Osiris realized this to some extent.

is different, both in general and in detail, from that which underlies the Christian story.[1]

2. Joseph.[2]

Mr. J. M. Robertson's views regarding Joseph are largely based upon the hypothesis of a Messias ben-Joseph, which has been already noticed.[3]

That the later Samaritan representatives of the Joseph clans postulated a Messiah of that house is perhaps not impossible; that these tribes themselves in earlier times looked forward to such a Messiah is very doubtful.[4]

"The myth of Joseph," Mr. Robertson confidently adds, "arose as a real accessory to the cult. Once introduced, he would naturally figure

[1] The fact that Mary is nowhere in the Gospels regarded as, in any sense, a *divine* woman (cp. Mark iii. 33, 34) tells also very strongly against her identification with the pagan goddess-mother. Even in the modern Roman Church, which renders *latreia* ('worship') to God, only *hyper-douleia* is offered to the Virgin—that is to say, an exaggerated form of the 'service' *douleia* rendered to the saints.

[2] *Christianity and Mythology*, pp. 326 ff.

[3] See Chap. VII. p. 166, Note 1.

[4] Dr. Cheyne says (*Ency. Bibl.*, art. 'Messiah,' § 9) of this theory: "The developed form of this idea is almost certainly a product of the polemic with Christianity, in which the Rabbins were hard pressed by arguments from passages which their own exegesis admitted to be Messianic."

There is, at least, no *evidence* of its existence until *after* the time of Christ. The Samaritan doctrine of the *Tāḥēb*, 'he who returns,' or 'he who restores,' is founded entirely upon Deut. xviii. 15, where it has no Messianic application.

as an elderly man, not only in the interest of the virgin-myth, but in terms of the Hebrew precedent adopted in the myth of the parentage of John the Baptist."

Mr. Robertson here jumps so rapidly from one assumption, and consequent assertion, to another, that it is difficult to see how he establishes his results even to his own satisfaction. Why was 'the myth of Joseph,' 'a real accessory to the cult' of a Messias ben-Joseph,' compounded with an older cult of an Ephraimite sun-god? Joseph, as a matter of fact, plays but a very subordinate part in the Gospel 'drama,' and, from a mythical point of view, might very well have been dispensed with altogether. And the 'virgin-myth' is really not a Hebrew concept at all.[1]

If we may judge from the recorded examples of abnormal births, the Hebrew view was previously quite different. However, even taking the story as a myth, it is much more probable that the account of Zacharias was an accessory to that of Joseph, than that it was the original pattern upon which the latter story was constructed.

There is, again, nothing here but assertion piled upon assertion, and no real *evidence* for these statements is forthcoming. Mr. Robertson, however, at least admits that the canonical

[1] It is found amongst the Hellenistic Jews (Philo, *Lib. de Cherub.* § 13), but in an allegorical sense only.

Gospels do not describe Joseph as a very old man,[1] as he desires they should do; but he derives comfort from the fact that not only some of the Apocryphs do, but also Christian tradition—meaning thereby the popular religious ideas embodied in art by medieval painters and others—which came largely from extra-canonical and pagan sources, when celibacy had become the ideal state of life. However, 'the old man,' when once obtained, is very useful to him, and he is straightway equated with the feeble old man leading an ass in the sacred procession of Isis, described by Apuleius in his *Metamorphoses*.

But Mr. Robertson himself—further on—supplies what is no doubt the true explanation of this symbolic figure. He quotes from Plutarch, who says, that in the court of the temple of that goddess at Sais there were sculptured 'a child, an old man and some animal figures'[2]—of which the two first named, he explains, stood simply for *the beginning and end of life*! Precisely so; the figures there depicted were merely symbolical of life-periods.

In like manner, the old man, in the procession referred to, was probably the living symbol of old age hobbling to the grave, and hence had nothing

[1] Cp. Matt. i. 24, 25, which certainly does not even suggest it. Contrast with this Luke i. 18.

[2] *De Is. et Osir.* xxxii. Plutarch says these consisted of 'a hawk, a fish and a hippopotamus,' symbolizing, respectively, God, hatred and impudence.

whatever to do with any mythic God. Moreover, in these symbolic representations just quoted, the goddess-mother is not depicted at all! Can we imagine a mythic picture in which the great Divine Mother of All—the central figure in any mythical scheme — is not portrayed? This fact alone would, in all probability, divest the picture of any such mythical significance as that alleged by Mr. Robertson.

But to return to sober history. The most serious objection that can be raised against the historical character of Joseph is the paucity of references to him in the New Testament. He is mentioned exactly *seven* times by both Matthew and Luke; by the former only in chaps. i. and ii.; by the latter only in chaps. i.–iv. The last reference in chap. iii. occurs in the Lucan genealogy, while in chap. iv. Jesus is described merely as 'the carpenter's son.'

Mark, who has no Birth Story, does not mention him. Elsewhere he is referred to directly in the Fourth Gospel (i. 45, vi. 42), and indirectly in Matt. xiii. 15, where Jesus is again called 'the carpenter's son.'[1]

Now, how are we to account for such a meagre list of references upon any hypothesis of an

[1] The Sinaitic palimpsest here substitutes 'the son of Joseph.' The phrase בַּר נַבָּר simply means 'a carpenter,' and it has been suggested that, as used in the tradition, it may mean here nothing more than this (cp. Mark vi. 3).

historic Joseph? This fact is, we think, not difficult to account for. Joseph was not a figure of the first magnitude in the Gospel story, and may have died before Jesus reached early manhood. But Mark may have heard of him, and of the Birth Story also, though he mentions neither. It is only in the earlier episodes of the Infancy that Joseph has any real significance in the story. For, as Schmiedel points out,[1] women who gave birth to children outside of the bonds of wedlock were, by the Mosaic law, liable to be put to death by stoning (Deut. xxii. 21), and even in Roman times they would have been subject to severe social and ecclesiastical censure. The whole story, too, would no doubt, if it be historical, naturally be kept in the background, for obvious reasons, during the lifetime of the Mother of Jesus, and made known only to a limited circle during that period.

In any case we may well take heed to the warning of Dr. Cheyne—no credulous upholder of tradition—who says: "It would, however, be hasty to assert that there was no element of truth in the expression 'Joseph, the husband of Mary, of whom was born Jesus, who is called the Christ' (Matt. i. 16)."[2]

[1] *Ency. Bibl.*, art. 'Mary,' § 16; cp. Deut. xxii. 21.
[2] *Ibid.*, art. 'Joseph.'

3. The Birth Story.[1]

Mr. Robertson says: "The bringing forth of the god-child while 'on a journey' is an item common to a dozen pre-Christian myths, as those of Hagar and Ishmael, Mandane and Cyrus, Latona and Apollo, Maya and Buddha, and the stories of Æsculapius and Apollonius of Tyana, and the peculiar motive of the tax-paying is almost certainly derived either from the Hindu legend of Kṛishna, or from a cognate Asiatic myth."

Let us here, in the first place, make a brief examination of this general statement. It is unfortunate for Mr. Robertson's illustrations that several out of the six given do not, as they stand in our records, relate to the birth of 'god-children' at all, the Buddha even especially disclaiming any divine origin. Neither, for that matter, is Jesus exactly represented by the Evangelists as 'a god-child,' in the pagan sense of the term.

As regards Latona (Lēto) and Apollo, a later myth certainly regards her as the mistress of Zeus, and, therefore, an object of jealousy to Hērē who persecuted her during her pregnancy. And, after some wanderings, she is said to have settled at last on the island of Ortygia, where she gave birth to Apollo. But this is hardly an example of a birth 'on a journey.'

Again, Æsculapius (Asclēpios) is said, in

[1] *Christianity and Mythology*, pp. 319, 329–31.

common story, to have been born to Apollo and Coronis. The local legend of Epidaurus, it is true, related that he was born whilst his mother was accompanying her father on a campaign in the Peloponnesus; but other versions omit this detail. In the case of Kṛishna, the certainly late date of the present myth invalidates the comparison.[1] Even here, however, Mr. Robertson is inexact. The motive of the journey in the Gospels is not tax-paying (so wrongly in A.V., followed by him), but *registration* in a census of the population. And for such registrations in Judæa, about that time, there is some direct historic evidence, though this particular census has not been identified.

The rest of Mr. Robertson's criticism (pp. 329–331) we must deal with in a condensed form. "The cave at Bethlehem," he says, "had been from time immemorial a place of worship in the cult of Tammuz, as it actually was in the time of Jerome." There is little or no evidence for this statement.

Certainly Jerome says (*Ep.* 58, *Ad Paulinum*), that it was so used in his day (*circa* 395 A.D.); but there is no proof, or even probability, that it

[1] Dr. L. D. Barnett, of the British Museum, says (*Hinduism*, 1906, p. 21 note): "A considerable number of the details in the Puranic myths of Kṛishna's birth and childhood seem to have come from debased Christian sources (apocryphal Gospels and the like) such as were current in the Christian Church of Malabar." See also *infra*, pp. 200, 201.

had been so used 'from time immemorial.' For, *e.g.*, in the strictly legalistic period, after the reforms of Ezra, it is extremely doubtful whether *any* forms of idolatry survived in Judah, since they were suppressed with great thoroughness.[1] Moreover, a *cave* is mentioned only in the late New Testament apocryphal narratives, which dress up the canonical story with many fantastic details and additions, derived, no doubt, from various pagan sources.

Again, Daoud, or Dôd (Dodo), he says, was *identical* with Tammuz, and it is not improbable that on this account Bethlehem was traditionally called 'the City of David.' That Tammuz bore the epithet *Dôd* ('beloved') has been shown by Sayce[2] and others. But Dr. Sayce also points out that the same epithet is also applied to Jahveh in Isa. v. 1, where He is termed *Dôdi* ('my beloved'), and adds: "We can easily understand how a name of this kind, with such a signification, should have been transferred by popular affection from the Deity [Jahveh] to the King, of whom it is said that 'all Israel and Judah loved him' (1 Sam. xviii. 6)."

In fact, there is little doubt in the minds of any but the out-and-out mythologizers that Bethlehem was not called 'the city of David,' because Tammuz was worshipped there some three thousand years ago (which is doubtful, to say the

[1] Cp. Neh. xiii. [2] *Hibbert Lectures* (1887), pp. 56–57.

least of it); but because all Hebrew tradition asserted that the beloved king who bore this designation was descended from a well-to-do sheep-farmer of that place.

Again, Mr. Robertson refers to 'the mythical Joshua, son of Miriam,' as an early Hebrew deity, one form of the Tammuz-cult, and supposes that this cult may, in pre-Christian times, have been a worship of Mother and Child, Mary and Jesus —that, in short, Maria = Myrrha, and that Jesus was a name of Adonis.

The questions of the divine character of Joshua, and the equating of 'Maria' [Mariam] with Myrrha, etc., have already been discussed, and we need only add here that the statement that the mother of Joshua was named Mariam, is based solely upon an Arab tradition of no great antiquity, and of absolutely no historical value.

It is probable that the Arabs, who are usually very ignorant of history, confused the equivalent names Joshua and Jesus, and, in so doing, made Mariam the mother of the former also.

Neither have we any historic record of the worship of a 'Mother and Child' in any heterodox Israelite cult, and, moreover, to be exact, Matthew expressly states (ii. 11) that the young Child alone was 'worshipped' by the Magi.[1] That many of the peoples both in and

[1] It is perhaps worth noting that the *shepherds* are not represented by Luke (chap. ii.) as 'worshipping' either Child or Mother.

around Palestine had a cult (or cults) of this kind is an undoubted fact; but there is no record of its adoption, or practice, by the Israelites amongst the various other idolatries, to which at different periods they were addicted. Lastly, the identification of a 'pre-Christian Jesus' with Adonis is a mere speculation, for which no real evidence has, so far, been adduced.

Again, Mr. Robertson also lays much stress upon the statement of Luke that Jesus was at birth 'wrapped in swaddling clothes' and 'laid in a manger,' as being also an exact description of several other mythical divine children; and he further describes the crib of the infant Dionysos as being represented in ritual and art as a 'manger-basket.'

But, since all infants are at first wrapped in some kind of 'swaddling clothes,' and laid in some sort of cradle, it is only natural that stories of mythical children should also relate the same custom. The 'manger-basket,' however, is a mere fiction of Mr. Robertson's own devising; for the cradle of Dionysos was represented as an ordinary wicker one of a type still in common use, without anything appertaining to a *manger* about it; while that of Jesus, we are told, was a manger *pur et simple*, and, therefore, no proper cradle at all.

Also, it is to be remembered that προσκυνέω likewise *may* mean *to salaam to*, in the usual Eastern fashion.

Again, Mr. Robertson's attempt to identify the birth of Jesus, as celebrated at Christmas-time, with that of 'Horus, son of the Virgin Isis,' which was represented annually as occurring soon after the winter-solstice (21st December), breaks down entirely on an examination of the real facts of the case.

There is, as is well known, no record of the actual birthday of Jesus. It is quite certain, however, from the narrative of Luke, that the Christians of the first century did not fix it about the time of the winter-solstice, because December comes in the height of the rainy season in Judæa, when neither flocks nor shepherds are to be found at night-time in the fields around Bethlehem. It has been surmised, with some probability, from what is known about the 'course of Abia' (Luke i. 5), that the earliest Christians regarded the month of October as the time of that event; but this is not certain. The *festival* was kept, later on, at various times (in March, September, December, January, etc.) by different churches, until at length Pope Julius I. intervened, and the 25th December was fixed officially, from 354 A.D. onwards, as the date upon which it should be universally observed. The object of this arrangement was, no doubt, largely to assimilate a pagan solar-festival with it, and thus to facilitate the Christianizing of the Empire. It is absolutely certain, however, that in the first

century there was no identification of the birth-day of Jesus with that of the sun-god soon after the time of the winter-solstice.

As regards the further statement that the goddess Isis was held by the ancient Egyptians to be 'supernaturally impregnated by a ray of light—an idea reproduced in pictorial treatment of the myth of the Virgin Mary,' there can be little doubt that this concept was purely a mystical and symbolic one. It refers, like a large number of similar cases collected by Mr. Hartland,[1] rather to some occult cosmical process than to an actual birth of any being, real or imaginary, in a mythic scheme.

Finally, Mr. Robertson's explanation of the shepherds as derivatives from the Kṛishna-myth is largely discounted—if not discredited—at the outset by the notoriously late date of that story in its present form.[2] Furthermore, these shep-

[1] *The Legend of Perseus, passim.* So also through her *ear*. Cp. the medieval hymn to the Virgin (Lincoln MSS. Ff. i. 6, 42), 'mater Christi, quæ *per aurem* concepisti.'

[2] The story of Jesus Christ was carried into India at the latest in the latter part of the second century (see Eusebius *H.E.* bk. v. chap. ix.). According to Weber's version of a paragraph in the *Mahābhārata* it was brought back to India by Brahman travellers. Both Weber and Lassen interpret the passage to mean that early in the Christian era three Brahmans visited a community of Christians in the East, and that on their return "they were able to introduce *improvements* (!) into the hereditary creed, and more especially to make the worship of Kṛishna Vāsudēva, the most prominent feature of their system" (Hardwick, vol. i. p. 182). See also notes in the works of Weber and Lassen. See also an article

herds figure in a totally different rôle in each story. In the Lucan narrative they are mere recipients of the first news of the birth. In the Kṛishna story the babe Kṛishna is carried away by his father to one of them, who brings him up in seclusion.

And this latter objection applies with still greater force to the story of Hermes and Apollo, which does not seem to bear even the most distant resemblance to the narrative in the Gospel. In all ages, and in all countries, when and where the occupations of the people are mainly pastoral, it is not extraordinary that shepherds should be in some way, directly or indirectly, connected with stories of births, whether actual or merely mythical. But this fact does not, *per se*, reduce all these stories to being mere variants of some universal myth, any more than the numerous parallels that exist between events in history and in fiction reduce all historic narratives to the level of mere fictitious stories. In a word, the same *kind* of events often occur in myth and in actual life,

by an anonymous Sanskṛitist in the *Athenæum* (10th August 1867), where the writer shows how the Brahmans took from the Gospels such things as suited them, and used these extracts in the composition of 'Kṛishna-episodes' interpolated into the *Mahābhārata*, etc.

For a further analysis of the Birth Story, and its alleged relation to *Buddhism*, and the ethnic cults generally, see present writer's *Critical Examination of the Doctrine of the Virgin Birth* (1908), Appendix F.

and are, therefore, described in much the same terms.

4. The Baptism.[1]

Professor Drews' attitude with reference to this event in the life of Jesus may be gathered from the following passage: "In Hebrew the word 'spirit (*ruach*) is of feminine gender. As a consequence of this, the Holy Ghost was looked upon by the Naasenes and the earliest Christians as the 'Mother' of Jesus. Indeed, it appears that, in their view, the birth of the Divine Son was only consummated by the baptism and the descent of the Spirit. According to the Gospels which we possess, on the occasion of the baptism in the Jordan, a voice from above uttered these words: 'Thou art my beloved son; in thee I am well pleased.' On the other hand, in an older reading of the passage in question in Luke, which was in use as late as the fourth century, it runs, in agreement with Ps. ii. 7: 'Thou art my son; this day have I begotten thee.' This is shown by the dove which descends from heaven, for this was the holy bird, the symbol of the mother-goddess of Nearer Asia."

It is true that, owing largely to the accident of the word *ruăch* being generally feminine, the Naasenes, in later times, regarded the Holy

[1] *The Christ Myth*, 3rd ed. p. 118.

Spirit as the *female* complement to God the Father,[1] thereby, perhaps, endeavouring to bring the Hebrew and Christian conception of the Godhead into line with the heathen and Gnostic views which almost universally recognized a duality of sex in the Divine Being.

But it is absolutely untrue to fact to assert that the earliest Christians generally regarded the Holy Spirit as the 'Mother' of Jesus.[2] The Birth narratives, as independent documents, certainly date from the first century, even if they were not actually inserted into the original 'Matthew' and 'Luke' until the beginning of the second; and as

[1] So also a fragment of (?) the *Gospel according to the Hebrews*, which reads: "My mother, the Holy Spirit, took me by one of my hairs, and bore me up on to the great mountain Tabor."

The Elkasaites (who also recognized a primordial duality of sex in the Godhead) made the Holy Spirit the 'sister' (ἀδελφή) of Jesus (Epiphanius, *Hær.* liii.). There can be little doubt but that these views of the Holy Spirit are due to Gnostic influences, which were already operative in the Church at the beginning of the second century, and that they do not represent the beliefs of the earlier Christians. And it surely cannot be the *Man* Jesus who is said to be taken to Mount Tabor, but the *Æon* Christus; hence the Holy Spirit is, in the mind of the writer, probably identical with the Gnostic Mother of Creation (see chap. vii. p. 168), and not the mother-goddess of the common nature-cults—a much coarser type of concept. In the New Testament, too, Spirit is *neuter*—τὸ πνεῦμα τὸ ἅγιον.

[2] Drews urges (p. 119 note), that the baptismal account in Mark represents practically the original views of the nature of His Divine birth, and really forms the Marcan birth-story.

The first mention of a *festival* of the Baptism of Jesus is found in the *Strom.* i. 21 of Clement of Alexandria, who says that the Basilidean Gnostics observed it on 6th or 10th January (11th or 15th Tuli).

early as the date of Mark's Gospel (*circa* 60–65 A.D.?) we find a *human* mother referred to (iii. 31–35). Any reference, therefore, to the Holy Spirit as 'Mother' must refer merely to the mother of the æonic Christ of the Gnostics.

The views of all three Synoptists regarding the meaning of both the Baptism and the Transfiguration of Jesus would seem to be that they were special assurances of the Divine support which he needed both for the Life and Death which they respectively heralded, as well as outward manifestations to mankind of the Divine authority and power which had been bestowed upon Him.

Neither is Professor Drews altogether fair in his bare and unqualified statement that there was an older reading in Luke in use as late as the fourth century. According to Epiphanius (*Hær.* xxx.), the Ebionite Gospel added to the first clause of Luke's statement the words ἐγώ σήμερον γεγενήκά σε ('I have this day begotten thee');[1] but

[1] This addition is only found (in existing Greek codices) in D (*circa* end of fifth century), a MS. abounding in interpolations. Elsewhere it is met with in the Old Latin Version (*circa* 150 A.D.?) and in a fragment of the *Gospel according to the Hebrews.*

Justin Martyr, Clement of Alexandria, Methodius, Lactantius, Juvencus, Hilary and Faustus the Manichæan also notice it. Augustine says (*De Consensu Evang.* ii. 14) that it was found in some MSS. in his time, but not in the older Greek codices. Some non-canonical writers also speak of 'a great light' and 'a fire' at the Baptism. Mark distinctly *implies* that the Vision of the Dove and the Voice were, largely at any rate, *subjective* in their nature (Mark i. 10; Matt. iii. 16).

this addition cannot seriously be adduced as evidence for early and official views, since the words are manifestly a 'tag' from the Psalms (Ps. ii. 7), added probably by some officious scribe to establish the view already entertained by some that the *spiritual* birth of Jesus dated only from His baptism.[1] The *oldest* extant version of the Baptism (Mark i. 11) omits them, in all authorities, as also does *Matthew*, and there is no special evidence to indicate that they were inserted in the original Lucan version, and only suppressed by later 'orthodox' scribes, a convenient and favourite hypothesis when all other testimony is wanting.

As regards the dove, and its sacred character in Asia Minor, as the bird of the great mother-goddess *Astarte*, it certainly was not regarded as divine amongst the earlier Hebrews, or later Jews. This fact is evidenced, *inter alia*, by its legalized use by poorer persons as a form of animal sacrifice to Jahveh (Lev. xii. 6; cp. Luke ii. 24). Indeed, the Jews commonly reproached the Samaritans with *worshipping* the dove, which, however, seems merely to have been venerated by them as the image of the Shechinah. Amongst the later Jews it was sometimes popularly supposed to have been the objective *form* in which the Spirit of Jahveh brooded over the waters of chaos (Gen. i. 2). And it long occupied a place

[1] This would be the view of both Ebionites and many Gnostics.

in the familiar imagery of the Old Testament (cp. Ps. lxviii.; Song of Sol. ii. 12) as a symbol of such divine qualities as innocence, gentleness and brooding love. It had, therefore, in a sense, a *quasi*-sacred character;[1] but it was never invested with a divine and personal character by them, much less did it receive worship.

[1] *e.g.* the sacrifices in which a dove was offered were not eaten.

CHAPTER X.

MYTHOLOGY AND THE GOSPELS (*continued*).

5. The Temptation.[1]

In passing on to a consideration of this event, Mr. Robertson remarks that the "Buddhist parallel clearly shows a nature-myth, possibly representing the sun-god as assailed by the storm-spirits at the outset of his career," and adds: "the Christian myth might fairly be regarded as a later sophistication [*sic*] of the same fancy."

We may here briefly dismiss this suggestion with the remark that, in our judgment, most readers who detected any 'sophistication' in these episodes would be more inclined to attribute it to the Buddhist narrative, which is very inferior both in *motif* and literary merit all throughout. It is also doubtful whether, in its present form, it has any great antiquity.

We find subsequently, however, that he prefers a derivation of this 'myth' from a story given by Ennius in his translation of the *Sacred History of*

[1] *Christianity and Mythology*, p. 343.

Euhemerism, preserved by Lactantius,[1] where Jupiter is led by Pan to the top of a mountain (the Pillar of Heaven), from which he contemplated the lands from afar, and there raised an altar, and sacrificed to Cœlus (Heaven). The Christian narrative, says Mr. Robertson, is "merely an ethical adaptation of the Greek story!"[2]

We regret to add that we are unable to trace any real and fundamental connection between the stories. In the Buddhist narrative, *e.g.*, the differences are very great; there the 'temptation' to satisfy the cravings of hunger, the promptings of ambition, and the doubts as to the overruling Providence of God, are all wanting. In the Roman story, too, Pan, as representing in satyr-form the lower and animal propensities of man, is a very different being to the Hebrew Satan; moreover, there is no tempting of Jupiter, as there is of Jesus. Jupiter, likewise, is wholly a god; Jesus is a sorely bested Man, although divine. There is, in short, not the least affinity between any of these narratives beyond the general idea of *trial*. It is difficult, also, to see how what has just previously been described as a 'sophistication' of the Buddhist story can suddenly have become an 'ethical adaptation' of

[1] *The Divine Institutes*, bk. i. chap. xi. This passage should be read and compared with Mark i. 13 and parallels.

[2] See also *Birth Stories*, Rhys Davids, i. 84, 96 f., 108 ff.; also Vendidad, xix. 1–11, and compare differences.

the Roman tale! If a conjecture may be hazarded here, we should be inclined to say that the Christian narrative largely presents, in picturesque and symbolic form, the subjective experiences and doubts of Jesus—whether these were of internal origin merely, or were suggested externally by some malignant spiritual being—as to His capacities and power for the great work which He had undertaken. Professor Bevan has suggested[1] that the scene is a description of a traditional practice, or ceremony, by which it was supposed that a man could obtain control over dæmons, and which is in use in Eastern countries even at the present day.

6. The Twelve Apostles.[2]

According to Professor Drews, the Twelve Apostles are a mere reflection of the traditional story that Joshua had twelve helpers, or assistants, when he led Israel through Jordan to the Promised Land. He referred previously, however (*op. cit.* p. 95), with approval to Mr. Robertson's theory that they represent, when present at the Lord's Supper, 'the twelve mythical priests' who were associated with Aaron at the Passover meal.

Another suggestion, much favoured by those

[1] In a paper read before Oxford Soc. of Hist. Theology, November 1901.

[2] *Die Christusmythe*, 4th ed. p. 185.

who would view the Gospels as simply an elaborate collection of astronomical and other myths, is, that Jesus and the Twelve, as they passed through the country of Galilee (Gālīl = 'circle,' 'district') teaching and healing the people, really represent the sun in its annual passage through the twelve signs of the zodiac.

Apart from such fancies, one would have thought that by this time it was well-known how prominent a part the number *twelve* plays in the ancient historic traditions of Israel. The voices of Israelite antiquity are unanimous in tracing the origin of the nation to the 'twelve' *b'ne Jisrā-ēl*, who, it is true, *may* have been mere eponymous ancestors to the congeries of allied clans that later on composed the nation. Jesus, therefore, had doubtless a profound reason for selecting *twelve* disciples as representatives of these traditional divisions, ten of which had long wholly disappeared from history.

Moreover, it was quite in accordance with the custom of Eastern teachers thus to gather round them such a picked body of disciples, who would be, in after years, the living depositaries of their doctrines.

The whole arrangement, therefore, is so natural, and so in accordance with all historic precedent, that we see no grounds whatever for resorting to a highly speculative theory, which makes of it merely an *idea* reflecting either the story of

an ancient mythical body of priests, or some cosmic phenomenon. Such explanations are both unnatural and superfluous, unless they rest upon better evidence than is here presented.

7. The Entry into Jerusalem.

With regard to this event in the life of Our Lord, Mr. Robertson makes the following comments: "Such a candid and scholarly inquirer as Dr. Percy Gardner (*Explor. Evang.*, 1899, p. 156) repeating once more the fallacious explanation which has imposed [*sic*] on so many of us, that 'an ass and the foal of an ass' represents a Greek misconception of the Hebrew way of saying 'an ass,' as if the Hebrews, even in everyday life, lay under a special spell of absurdity, when a glance at the story of Bacchus crossing a marsh on two (!) asses, and at the Greek sign of the constellation Cancer (an ass and its foal) would have shown him that he was dealing with a zodiacal myth."[1]

[1] *Christianity and Mythology*, p. 310. But see also p. 230, *infra*. Amongst other mythicizing guesses may here be mentioned one of Fries, who maintains (*Studien zur Odyssea*) that the wandering Odysseus, who is welcomed by the Phæacians, is a type of the spring-god (Marduk) entering his temple, and that—amongst the numerous mythological parallels—the entry of Jesus into Jerusalem is simply another form of this astro-mythological phase of the spring-god's festival, or of Odysseus, the ascetic *bhikshu*. The cleansing of the Temple he also explains as the destruction of chaos by the Deity, and the re-establishment of a new world!

The story here referred to is that told of Dionysos, who, when driven mad by Hērē, met during his peregrinations two asses ; and, mounting one of these, he crossed a marsh, and in this manner reached the temple of Dodona, where he came again to his senses. This story is supposed to be symbolic of the sun reaching its zenith in the month of June, and Mr. Robertson would have it that Jesus 'on the two asses' (= the two halves of the year) signifies that the sun-god is at its highest pitch of glory and power, and is then on the point of descending to his ultimate doom at the winter-solstice. As to the actual entry of Jesus into Jerusalem, there is, he says, "not a single item of it credible history."

We have, however, no explanation given us as to why this simple story—in which the 'supernatural' is conspicuously absent — cannot be 'credible history.' But, before turning to the text of the Gospels, we will carefully examine Mr. Robertson's mythical view.

Now, at times, the *zodiacal signs* and the *stellar constellations*, through which lies the sun's apparent path across the heavens during the year, are coincident. But owing to the phenomenon known as the 'precession of the equinoxes,' the sun each subsequent year enters upon (at the vernal equinox) its apparent path through the stars at a slightly different point. Thus, in the far-back days, when history began to dawn, the

point at which it crossed the Equator in spring (21st March) was situated in the constellation *Taurus* (Bull). Later, however, about the time of Christ, this point had shifted, and the sun at that time entered the constellation *Aries*[1] (Ram), and the *zodiacal* sign Cancer had then become the sun's position about the time of the summer-solstice (21st June).

Now in the group of stars forming the constellation *Cancer* (καρκίνος) two are especially conspicuous (in the body of the 'crab'), which were named by the Greeks τὼ ὄνω—'the two asses.'[2] Hence, at the summer-solstice, when the sun is at the highest point of its ascendancy, it (personified as Dionysos) might be said, figuratively, to be 'riding between two asses,' and the whole sidereal phenomenon might be celebrated in some manner as a summer festival, expressing a celestial event in picturesque and symbolic language.

But when we endeavour to apply these astronomical facts to the narrative of Jesus' entry into Jerusalem we find that they do not fit at all. No doubt He might be said to be at the zenith of His popularity and influence on that occasion.

[1] It now lies in the constellation *Pisces* (Fishes). It takes about 26,000 years for the sun to pass in succession through all the Twelve Signs, or Constellations, *i.e.* one-twelfth of the journey gives 2200 years, the time occupied in passing through one 'sign' and changing to the next.

[2] Theoc. xxii. 21; cp. Arat. 890–98; Theoph. *Sign. Pluv.* iv. 2; Pliny, xviii. 20. The Greeks undoubtedly borrowed the ideas and terms from the Chaldeans.

The event, however, is stated to have happened just before the Passover, *i.e.* about the time of the *vernal equinox.* If it merely represents (as Mr. Robertson thinks) some solar phenomenon, then it must certainly be connected with an *equinoctial* one. It is perfectly clear, therefore, that the Evangelists here are not telling a story which represents in picturesque and symbolic fashion the entrance of the sun into the *solstitial* zodiacal sign of that time. Consequently his explanation fails utterly, as does also the supposed mythical connection of the Birth and Death festivals with similar events. No doubt Mr. Robertson would reply that the *time* of these things was a mere trifling matter of detail; but it would have been just as easy, and more natural, for a compiler of mythical tastes to have avoided this error, and fixed a purely supposititious event at the time of year to which it was appropriate. We may, therefore, reasonably conclude that the Gospel writers would have made their pseudo-historical events agree in time with the solar phenomena, *e.g.*, in the case of the triumphant entry into the city, fixed it, say, at the summer-solstice of the year preceding the death of Jesus.

But this they have not done, and that fact alone forms a sufficient reason for concluding that the incident has no connection whatever with a solar myth.

Turning now to the text of the Gospels, we find that the editor of Matthew tells us (xxi. 4)

that this episode was the fulfilment of a prophecy of Zechariah (ix. 9). It will, therefore, be convenient to begin with an examination of this passage.

The Hebrew Massoretic text states that the future Messianic king is to come riding—

"Upon an ass, *even* upon a foal, a son of she-asses."[1]

The prophecy is—as prophecies in the Old Testament generally are—couched in terms of Hebrew poetry, the most important feature of which is a system of parallelism in the lines, the second member of the couplet repeating in somewhat different phraseology the sentiments expressed in the first one.

Now the conjunction *Vav* (ו) in such cases has commonly an *epexegetical* (explanatory) force renderable by 'even,' instead of the more purely conjunctive meaning 'and.' So also in Greek, *καί* has the double meaning 'and' and 'even,' according as it is conjunctive or explanatory.

Turning next to the Greek LXX translation of Zechariah we find the passage rendered thus :—

"Riding upon a beast of burden, *even* (*καί*) a young (ass) foal."[2]

Here *καί* is epexegetical.

It is to be noted, also, that the *ἐπί* ('upon') is not repeated after the *καί*, as it would be in

[1] עַל־חֲמוֹר וְעַל־עַיִר בֶּן־אֲתֹנוֹת.

[2] *ἐπιβεβηκὼς ἐπὶ ὑποζύγιον καὶ πῶλον νέον.*

Greek, if the meaning were 'upon a beast of burden, *and upon* a young ass,' *i.e.* upon *two* asses, as Mr. Robertson, misled by the indifferent A.V. translation, and a vehement desire to find myth everywhere, assumes.

The meaning, therefore, is clearly that there was to be only *one* ass, and that upon it the Messianic king was to ride into the city.

Referring next to the Gospels, we read (Mark xi. 7):—

"They bring the foal to Jesus, and put their cloaks upon *it*, and he sat upon *it*."[1]

In Luke xix. 35, we have the same statement in a slightly different form of words:—

"And they brought him to Jesus, and having thrown their cloaks upon the foal, they set Jesus upon [it]."[2]

The Fourth Gospel is equally instructive (John xii. 14, 15):—

"And Jesus having found a young ass, sat upon it, as it is written:

> "'Fear not, daughter of Zion:
> Behold thy King comes
> Sitting upon a foal of an ass;'"[3]

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[1] *φέρουσιν τὸν πῶλον πρὸς τὸν Ἰησοῦν, καὶ ἐπιβάλλουσιν αὐτῷ τὰ ἱμάτια [αὐτῶν], καὶ ἐκάθισεν ἐπ' αὐτόν.*

[2] *καὶ. ἤγαγον αὐτὸν πρὸς τὸν Ἰησοῦν, καὶ ἐπιρίψαντες αὐτῶν τὰ ἱμάτια ἐπὶ τὸν πῶλον ἐπεβίβασαν τὸν Ἰησοῦν.*

[3] *εὑρὼν δὲ ὁ Ἰησοῦς ὀνάριον ἐκάθισεν ἐπ' αὐτό, καθώς ἐστιν γεγραμμένον.*

> *Μὴ φοβοῦ, Θυγάτηρ Σιών·*
> *Ἰδού, ὁ Βασιλεύς σου ἔρχεται*
> *καθήμενος ἐπὶ πῶλον ὄνου.*

which shows that the writer—like Mark and Luke—correctly understood the prophecy of Zechariah.

But now let us turn back to the text of the Matthæan version of this incident. We find there, in xxi. 2 :—

"Ye will find an ass tied, *and a foal with her*," [1] *i.e. two* asses (*καί* here is not epexegetical).

Again, in ver. 5, the writer says, professedly translating Zechariah :—

"Thy king comes to thee . . . sitting upon an ass, *and upon a foal*, a son of a beast of burden." [2]

And in ver. 7 he further says :—

"And they led the she-ass, *and the foal* [to Jesus], and placed their cloaks upon *them*, and he sat upon *them*." [3]

Now what is the explanation of these variations in Matthew, from the text of a perfectly plain and straightforward story, correctly told by the three other Evangelists?

It is that the editor of the Gospel of Matthew, taking the story as he found it originally, probably in Mark, or a Marcan form, tried to improve upon it. Being extremely anxious—as 'Matthew' invariably is—to find a literal fulfilment of prophecy in *all* the acts and words

[1] *εὑρήσετε ὄνον δεδεμένην καὶ πῶλον μετ' αὐτῆς.*

[2] *ὁ βασιλεύς σου ἐρχεταί σοι. . . . ἐπιβεβηκὼς ἐπὶ ὄνου, καὶ ἐπὶ πῶλον υἱὸν ὑποζυγίου.*

[3] *ἤγαγον τὴν ὄνον καὶ τὸν πῶλον, καὶ ἐπέθηκεν ἐπ' αὐτῶν τὰ ἱμάτια, καὶ ἐπεκάθισεν ἐπάνω αὐτῶν.*

of Jesus, he seems to have turned directly to the Hebrew prophecy, where, as we have seen, he found the two lines of the prophecy connected by a *Vav*; and being apparently ignorant of the ancient Hebrew system of versification, he translated this *Vav* 'and,' and *supposed that the prophet really meant two asses*—a very natural mistake for an imperfectly informed person to make. That he derived this error from the Hebrew Massoretic text, and not from the LXX version, is evident from the fact that the LXX translator carefully avoids such a mistake by not repeating the ἐπί ('upon'), as we have seen, and as he undoubtedly would have done, had he meant that Jesus rode upon *two* asses—on the face of it a most palpable absurdity to all but an over-conscientious pedant. The result of the whole matter, therefore, is to justify fully Dr. Gardner's statement, upon which Mr. Robertson endeavours to pour contempt—a result which we might anticipate all along from the world-wide reputation of Dr. Gardner as both a brilliant and an accurate scholar.

There is, accordingly, no need to resort to Mr. Robertson's hypothetical Dionysos and his two asses, when a simple and perfectly natural explanation founded upon the error of a well-intentioned, but imperfectly informed writer, as regards this matter of detail, is ready to hand.

8. The Lord's Supper.[1]

This institution is for Mr. Robertson 'an imitation of a pre-existing ritual practice'; and, again: 'the supper was a Mithraic institution.'

He believes: "that the narrative first took shape in a Jesuist mystery-drama seems the most likely view of its origin. The supper itself was a mystery-drama, and to introduce the god in person was only to do what the Greeks had done long before, as in the *Bacchæ* of Euripides, and what the Egyptians did in the rites of Osiris."

Previously (p. 220)—referring to early Eucharistic practices in certain churches—he said: "As to what may seem to many readers the most unlikely of all, the eating of the baked image of a child, there is really the most evidence (!). It is an admitted historic fact that in some of the churches, after the abandonment of the eating of an actual lamb[2] in the Eucharist at Easter, there arose the practice of eating the baked image of a lamb. Without suggesting a similar process of substitution we may reasonably surmise that the *infaus farre confectus* of the *pagan charge*[3] was really a model of an infant in dough, after the manner of pagan-cults in all ages."

[1] *Christianity and Mythology*, p. 386 f.; cp. p. 220.

[2] The explanation appears to be that some Jewish Christian sects continued to eat the Passover before celebrating the Eucharist.

[3] Minucius Felix, *Octavius*, ix.

If Mr. Robertson means by the first two remarks quoted above that a common meal, with a peculiar sense of sanctity attached to it, is an institution not first devised by the early Christian society, or peculiar to it, we can readily assent to his statement. But if he means that the Christians derived the *idea* from the Mithraists, we dispute the contention, and ask for direct proof of such origin.

There can be no doubt that the Supper proper had its ultimate origin, primarily at least, in the Jewish Passover ;[1] but, at the same time, it was still further spiritualized by the addition of the Eucharistic celebration which followed after it. In all the brotherhoods of Essenes and Therapeutæ, as we have seen, similar meals prevailed, and Christianity, in adopting and still further spiritualizing these customs, only acted in accordance with the principles of all true development.

It is but natural that man should seize upon such primary instincts as hunger and thirst, and by carefully regulating their exercise in social communion, spiritualize them, thus indicating that there is a higher and nobler hunger and thirst

[1] Dr. Percy Gardner thinks (*The Relig. Exper. of St. Paul*, p. 110, note 2) that the Pauline Sacrament of the Lord's Supper was not suggested by the Greek Mysteries celebrated at Eleusis, as some scholars have maintained. See also arts. 'St. Paul and the Mystery Religions,' *The Expositor* (April, May, July, etc., 1912), by Professor Kennedy.

than that of the body, and one in which spiritual sustenance may be conveyed to mankind through even material channels.

Our information respecting the Mithraic Supper, however, is very scanty and incomplete. The Mithraists appear to have eaten thereat bread and drunk water; *possibly* wine was added.[1] But, it seems, as in the case of other pagan mysteries, to have been intended rather to promote ecstatic states of mind, together with, perhaps, a development of the subconscious supernormal powers, than to act as an ethical and spiritual bond of union between man and man, and man with God, as in the case of the Christian institution.[2]

Turning now to the *Octavius* of Minucius Felix (*circa* 220 A.D.) we find the heathen objector *Cæcilius* saying (chap. ix.): "Now the story about the initiation of young novices is as much to be detested as it is well known. An infant covered

[1] Our authority for this statement is Justin Martyr, who says (*Apol.* i. 66), that, "wicked dæmons have imitated [the Eucharist] in the mysteries of Mithras . . . [wherein] bread and a cup of water are placed with certain incantations in the mystic rites of one who is being initiated." We do not really know whether the later Mithraists did not borrow from the Christian Eucharist, or, again, those of an earlier age from the Paschal Feast of the Jews. In any case, the Mithraic Supper certainly seems to have served quite a different purpose.

[2] Those who were initiated into Mithraism had to pass through quite a long period of probation, with scourging and fasting, and ordeal by water, and only then were eligible for admission as soldiers fighting on behalf of Mithra. And these severe tests

over with meal, that it may deceive the unwary, is placed before him [the catechumen], who is to be stained with their rites; this infant is slain by the young pupil, who has been urged on as if to harmless blows on the surface of the meal with dark and secret wounds. Greedily (oh! horror) those who are present drink up its blood; eagerly they divide its limbs. By this victim they are pledged together; with this consciousness of wickedness they are contracted to a mutual silence."

Octavius, the Christian advocate, very justly replies that these statements are mere fables set forth by those who never witnessed such things as they relate, and never inquired into the truth of them; the whole statement, in short, is a bare-faced calumny. The truth is that the whole fable of the dough-infant is absurd. The Christians never practised even sham ritual-murder. As a matter of fact, a similar slander has been per-

merely admitted to the lowest terrestrial grade of initiates. There were still two others to attain, those of the 'Bull' and the 'Lion,' each involving further probation and tests before the soul could rise above the earth and its limitations. It then ascended higher by the grades of 'Vulture,' 'Ostrich' and 'Crow' through the region of the æther; then it strove to become pure 'Fire' through the grades of 'Gryphon,' of 'Perses' and of the 'Sun.' Finally, the soul attained complete union with the Divine Nature through the last grades of 'Father Eagle,' 'Father Falcon' and 'Father of Fathers.' A holy *cave* on a hill was the place of worship, and the mystic rites involved watching and fasting all night till dawn (*Recherches sur le Cult de Mithras*, Lagarde). For a short account, see also *Hist. of Christian Church*, Foakes Jackson, pp. 184–85.

petrated upon the Jews in all ages of the Christian era down to the present day, when it is still believed in by the ignorant Christian populace of Eastern Europe. This charge of modern ritual-murder, followed by a cannibalistic feast, has been, however, carefully inquired into, and thoroughly refuted by Professor Strack[1]—a non-Jew—who, while showing the absurdity of the accusation, examines carefully the whole subject of superstitions connected with the use of blood. The idea of the efficacy of blood is a very old one, and since the beliefs and practices of the Jews and Christians were for several centuries much confused by their heathen neighbours, we can readily understand how a similar custom came to be attributed to both. But there is no evidence whatever for even *feigned* ritual-murder, much less for cannibalism, in historic times, in either religion.

Dr. Edwin Hatch, who is quoted above by Mr. Robertson, in describing a ninth century Mass at Rome on Easter Eve, for the benefit of the newly baptized, says: "The mystic offering on the Cross is represented in figure. . . . And there was one more symbolic rite in that early Easter sacrament, the mention of which is often suppressed—a lamb was offered on the altar, afterwards cakes in the shape of a lamb."

This lamb he appears to regard as representing

[1] *The Jew and Human Sacrifice* (1909).

in symbol, life, death and resurrection. This is not improbable, at least in Christian times; but it seems doubtful whether such ever was the case with the Jewish Paschal Lamb. The original idea was rather that of protection afforded against the destroying dæmon ('angel') to the members of the household in which the blood had been sprinkled and its flesh eaten by the inmates. Blood was regarded as *par excellence* the seat of life, and, therefore, protective in its character and effects, probably by diverting the attention of the dæmon as he passed by. Here the Israelites utilized—as we so often find—an old animistic belief, and at the same time lifted it up to a higher plane of spiritual meaning. Beyond this fact we cannot see any further trace of pagan ideas, but rather an attempt at, it may be, identifying the Christian with the Jewish sacrifice.

9. Judas Iscariot.[1]

Mr. Robertson's theory of the 'origin' of Judas Iscariot is that the idea was first developed as a 'character' in a primitive mystery-play, or ritual-drama. The suggestion is once more interesting, so we will give the statement of it in his own words. "In the *Gospel of Peter* 'the Jews' figure as equivalent factors with Herod and Pilate in the crucifixion, and in a ritual-drama, written

[1] *Christianity and Mythology*, p. 385.

for an audience so prepared, unnamed Jews would figure as the god's enemies and captors. At a later period the anti-Jewish *animus* which led to the presentment of the whole Twelve in the Gospel story as deserting their Lord at the supreme moment, would easily develop the idea of the actual treachery of one of the Twelve, and to him would be allotted the part of the leading captor, who to start with had been simply *Ioudaios*, 'a Jew.' A bag to hold the reward would be a natural stage accessory; in this way would arise the further myth that the traitor who 'carried the bag' was treasurer of the group, and a miser and a thief at that; while out of Ioudaios would grow the name Judas."

It would be more satisfactory, in the first place, to hear the evidence which Mr. Robertson has for the existence of these 'ritual-dramas' amongst the Jews and early Christians of Our Lord's time. As, however, none is forthcoming in his books, we must suppose that he falls back upon the hypothetical 'Jesus-cults' of pre-Christian times, in which it is asserted (upon very insufficient grounds) that a 'Jesus' was worshipped as their cult-deity, perhaps under the form of a sort of dramatic representation of their esoteric teaching.

Now we know that something remotely resembling this existed among the Greeks and other Aryan races during that period, as, also,

amongst some Semitic peoples, as, for instance, in the Adonis rites. There were, *e.g.*, the Eleusinian Mysteries, wherein were set forth dramatically the myth of the goddess-mother Dēmētēr and her daughter Persephonē, representing the powers of preservation and reproduction inherent in Nature.

But of anything of this kind, amongst post-exilic Jews, at least, we are absolutely ignorant. Their extant literature records none, though it refers to the various idolatries to which they had been addicted. Indeed, the Jewish mind, between the times of the return from exile and the Christian era, seems to have been thoroughly saturated with the spirit of the so-called Mosaic legalism, which tended effectually to kill all other conceptions of a contrary nature,[1] while it has served as a tie to knit together the whole Jewish race in a monotheistic creed down to the present day. The growth, therefore, of the figure out of a ritual-drama, founded, let us say, upon such traditions as those embodied in the Gospel of Peter, would, in any case, be something quite late and probably Aryan in its origin and inception—a sort of protest, in fact, against the Jewish legalistic element in a second century (or later) and mainly Gentile Church.

But it is precisely in *early* documents of

[1] Apocalyptic Messianism, however, managed to exist side by side with it, but was greatly modified by its influence.

Judaic-Christian origin, for the most part, and dating from the latter half of the first century that we *first* find the fully developed story of Judas, not, be it noted, in the literature which was written subsequently by Greek and Roman converts of the second or later centuries. And as for the name Judas representing simply Ioudaios, 'a Jew,' it is well-known that it was a not uncommon personal name (being the Græcized form of the Hebrew Judah), long before the time of Christ, and no less than *eight* others of that name, mentioned in the Scriptures and Apocrypha, are held in memory at the present day.

Lastly, Mr. Robertson's suggestion of the final 'stage-touch' to the character of villain in the mystery play, where the 'bag' is added, and the reputation of miser and thief acquired, does credit to the powers of his dramatic imagination, but it is a mere fiction, without one jot or tittle of evidence to justify its intrusion into sober history. If Mr. Robertson has any *evidence* to support such an hypothesis, let him by all means produce it, and we will gladly welcome the proof as a ray of that final truth, of which we are all in equally earnest search.

There is, however, a very generally accepted explanation of the term Iscariot, which it will be well worth our while to examine before proceeding further with mythical theories of origin.

Ishkarioth, 'man of Karioth,' is still accepted by Holtzmann.[1]

But the whereabouts of this Karioth (or Kerioth) is quite uncertain. In Josh. xv. 25, there is a reference to a *q'riyyoth*; but this word would appear to be a plural of a local dialectical form *qiryath*, 'a city,' and, therefore, to refer to a group of towns mentioned in the R.V. as 'Kerioth-hezron (the same is Hazor).' A Kerioth in Moab is also mentioned in Jer. xlviii. 24, 41, and Keim believed that he had discovered yet another (now called *Kuriut*) in Josephus, *B.J.* I. vi. 5, and *Ant.* XIV. iii. 4; but this is doubtful.

The objection raised to the first-named derivation does not seem to be insurmountable. 'Man from Kerioth' (cities-district) is not impossible. Or, again, he may have been a native of the Kerioth in Moab, though of Jewish extraction.

The chief difficulty with these derivations, however, seems to lie in the fact that it is doubtful whether the initial 'Is' of his name really represents the Hebrew אִישׁ (*ish*), 'man,' the probability being that the 's' is connected rather with the second part of the word.[2] On the whole, therefore, 'man from Kerioth' is a doubtful

[1] *Hand-Commentar*, i. p. 97.

[2] There is, *e.g.*, the Syriac form *skariota*, which, however, does not seem to be identifiable with אִישׁ קְרִיּוֹת; for in it the Syriac has ס and not ש, and כ and not ק, and the initial vowel is altogether wanting.

derivation, and we have, perhaps, to look farther afield.

But the resources of the mythicist do not come to an end with Mr. Robertson and his theory. Professor W. B. Smith has another and rival hypothesis,[1] which we will proceed to state. After a minute discussion of the variant forms of (I)skariot(h)—*Iskariotes* (Mark xiv. 43), *Käryotes* (ℵ, John vi. 71, etc.) and *Scariotes* (D, Matt. x. 4, etc.)—he turns to its meaning. The generally received view, already referred to, he dismisses summarily: "for every reason we must reject the accepted interpretation 'man of Kerioth' as impossible," claiming the support of Wellhausen in so doing. The latter scholar, he says, also rejects the notion that it is a gentilitial, and wisely inclines to regard it as a 'name of reproach, like Bandit (Sicarius).' He also favourably notes in passing—but not to adopt—the suggestion of the Hon. Willis Brown (*The Open Court*, August 1909), that the name is connected with the Hebrew root *S-K-R*, and means 'hired.'[2]

There is, however, he continues, another Hebrew root of the same three letters (סכר), which appears '*once* in the exact sense which the New Testament seems to require,' viz. in Isa. xix. 4. But he admits that this stem regularly means 'shut up'

[1] Cp. *Hibbert Journal* (April 1911), pp. 529–44.

[2] Cp. Matt. xxvii. 9, 10; [Zech. xi. 12;] but the older Mark omits mention of latter.

in Hebrew, Aramæan and Syriac, and *may* be so rendered here (Cheyne); and that in another passage (Ezek. xxx. 12) the initial letter ס (s) may be a mistake for מ (m), as many scholars suppose. But none of these facts, he believes, affect the case, and the translation of the word *v'sikkarti* in the LXX by *καὶ παραδώσω* ('and I will deliver up') corresponds exactly to the words of Matt. xxvi. 15. Hence, he holds that since the Greek verb *παραδιδόναι* means strictly 'to hand over,' 'surrender' rather than 'to betray,'[1] Iscariot means simply 'the Deliverer-up'—not 'the Traitor.' "(I)scariot is then precisely what Wellhausen felt it must be, a 'Schimpfname,' a sobriquet, an opprobrious nickname, the most appropriate, and even unavoidable."

There is, perhaps, much to be said in favour of this acute theory of Professor Smith. But the further conclusion that he draws therefrom is utterly inadmissible, unless he can also show that Jesus is wholly unhistorical. He says: "I suspect that the oldest thought was one of *the surrender of the Great Idea of the Jesus, of the Jesus-cult, by the Jews to the heathen.*[2] This, in fact, was the supreme, the astounding fact of early Christian history, and engaged intensely the minds of men."

And again: "that Judas Iscariot typifies the

[1] But see Liddell and Scott's Lexicon, *s.v.*

[2] Italics ours.

Jewish people in its rejection of the Jesus-cult seems so obvious, it seems to meet us so close to the threshold of the inner sense of the New Testament, that it may move our wonder that any one should overlook it."

With every respect for Professor Smith's able and detailed analysis, we cannot follow him in this conclusion. The earliest disciples and evangelists belonged to the more simple folk, whose minds are 'intensely engaged' rather with concrete facts, those facts of their daily life, which are embodied in *persons* and *things*.

The *idea* comes afterwards, and is the outcome of education and reflection. It is much easier, therefore, to identify Judas with some actual *man* who was a member of the little group which Jesus gathered round Himself to receive His teaching, in the first place, and afterwards to pass it on to the world.

Nor does the descriptive designation of Traitor (or Deliverer-up), in such a case as this, present any difficulty. The experiences of almost any little band of 'reformers' (or would-be reformers by violent means) of the world about them would furnish a similar example. Such bodies of enthusiasts almost always contain at least one member who is willing to make terms with 'the Powers that be' by handing over his leader or comrades to them. And this is precisely what Judas is said to have done, whatever his ruling

motive, or motives, may have been.[1] The whole story of the betrayal—read as history—is, in fact, perfectly true to human nature, and actual human life and experience, in all ages.

[1] We may advert here to De Quincey's theory that the motive of Judas was merely to force the hand of Jesus to declare Himself a temporal Messiah. This was, undoubtedly, the general aim of the disciples at that time.

CHAPTER XI.

MYTHOLOGY AND THE GOSPELS (*continued*).

10. Jesus and Barabbas.[1]

Professor Drews says that while the Jews were subject to Persian government, a solar festival was inaugurated amongst them, which combined the old Babylonian feast of the Sakaees[2] with the Persian feast of the 'Beardless One,' and was known later as the Feast of Purim (Lots).

Further: "in their accounts of the last events of the life of the Messiah, Jesus, the custom at the Jewish Purim feast . . . passed through the minds of the Evangelists. They described Jesus as the Haman, Barabbas as the Mordecai of the year, and, in so doing, on account of the symbol of the lamb of sacrifice, they merged the Purim feast in the feast of Easter, celebrated a little later. They,

[1] *The Christ Myth*, 3rd ed. pp. 74, 76.

[2] In this festival a mock king is said to have represented the departing winter sun: the Persian ceremony was very similar. In the Jewish Purim feast Haman is supposed to have represented the dying sun of the old year, and Mordecai the rising sun of the new year, shortly before the vernal equinox.

however, transferred the festive entry of the 'Beardless One,'[1] his hostile measures against the shopkeepers and money-changers, and his being crowned in mockery as 'King of the Jews,' from Mordecai-Barabbas to Haman-Jesus, thus anticipating symbolically the occurrences which should only have been completed on the Resurrection of the Marduk [= the spring-sun] of the new year.

"According to an old reading of Matt. xxvii. 17 et seq., which, however, has disappeared from our texts since Origen, Barabbas, the criminal set against the Saviour, is called 'Jesus Barabbas'—that is, 'Jesus the son of the Father.'[2] May an indication of the true state of the facts not lie herein, and may the figure of Jesus Barabbas, the god of the year, corresponding to both halves of the year, that is, of the sun's course upwards and downwards, not have separated into two distinct personalities on the occasion of the New Year's feast?"[3]

Before proceeding further with the consideration of this interesting and, at first sight, plausible speculation, it will be well to make a careful examination of the text of Matthew at this point.

It is true that several *Cursive* MSS. and some

[1] But see Mr. Robertson's explanation, p. 210 *supra*.

[2] Another explanation makes it 'son of a Rabbi.'

[3] *The Christ Myth*, pp. 75, 76. So Winckler explains Joshua and Caleb as the winter and summer sun respectively.

versions (Syr. Arm. Jer.'s) of no great authority read here 'Jesus Barabbas'; but none of the great and more ancient *Uncials* sanction this addition. The simpler explanation, perhaps, of the insertion of 'Jesus' before Barabbas in the texts referred to above, is that it is due to an instance of what is known as 'dittography' in MSS.; *i.e.* the repetition (in copying) of the last syllable of the word preceding the one to be written next—a mistake to which all copyists are peculiarly liable, especially in the case of short words. Thus we have here, *απολυσω υπιν βαραββαν η ιησουν*. The scribe in copying this, which, we must remember, was written continuously (without the word-spacing of modern printed books), probably repeated in error the last syllable of *υμιν*, with this result

απολυσωυμινιψβαραββαν, κ.τ.λ.

Now *ιν* is the usual Cursive MS. abbreviation for *ιησουν* (Jesus), and it was suggested by Tregelles that the scribe, on seeing his error, afterwards *deleted* the superfluous syllable (*under*lined above) in the usual way with dots—thus *ιὺν*. This *ιὺν* was then mistaken by some subsequent scribe, or reader, for *ιν*, and this the more readily because *βαραββαν* in the passage appears to be a patronymic.[1]

[1] Meyer and Fritsche defend the insertion of *Ιησοῦν* here, and think that subsequent copyists erased it from motives of reverence. But, if so, why is it retained in any of the later cursives? Tischendorf

On the other hand, 'Jesus' was, as we have seen, a very popular, and, therefore, a very common Jewish personal, or circumcision, name, and it is by no means impossible that Barabbas was so named; the general balance of the two clauses also rather suggests this view.

But an argument against this hypothesis would be the fact that in ver. 20 we read: *ἵνα αἰτήσωνται τὸν βαραββᾶν, τὸν δὲ Ἰησοῦν ἀπολέσωσιν* ('In order that they should ask for Barabbas, and destroy Jesus')—where both *βαραββᾶν* and *Ἰησοῦν*, by the article *τόν* prefixed to each, appear to indicate that previously he was simply designated Barabbas.[1]

Accordingly, the careless error of some ancient scribe is a much simpler, and more natural explanation, than the highly hypothetical theory put forward by Professor Drews and others, most of the outlines of which (to say nothing of the details) do not at all fit the Barabbas

inserts it in earlier editions of his text, but omits it in later ones; finally, he thought that it arose from Jerome's account of the parallel reading in the *Gosp. acc. to the Hebrews*. Alford's explanation is that some ignorant scribe, unwilling to concede to Barabbas the epithet *ἐπίσημον* ('illustrious,' 'notable'), wrote in the margin *ιησουν*; and that from thence it found its way into the text in ver. 16, and, when once supposed to be a prefix to Barabbas, into ver. 17 also.

It is interesting to observe that in the Latin trans. of Origen the word 'Jesus' stands in ver. 17, but not in ver. 16 also.

[1] It is curious, however, that, in whatever way we explain the matter, both the Synoptists and 'John' exhibit such entire unanimity in withholding the *circumcision* name of Barabbas! But perhaps they did not know it.

episode of the Gospels. The whole balance of *evidence*, therefore, is directly against any such mythical explanation as is here proposed.

And, in any case, Professor Drews' explanation of Barabbas does not of necessity follow, even if the *original* text did read Ἰησοῦν Β. Such a fact might very well be a mere coincidence of a common name; very much, *e.g.*, as two prisoners in an English court, one perhaps innocent and the other guilty, might happen to be each named 'John.'

II. The Seamless Tunic.[1]

The idea of the seamless coat of Jesus was, according to Mr. Robertson, derived from the story of the Chitōn woven for Apollo, and the Peplos, or shawl, woven for Hērē at Elis.

This seamless coat has, he says, a mystical significance, representing 'the robe of the solar Osiris' which is 'one and indivisible, that robe being the Universal Light (Plutarch).'[2]

We need not, however, go so far afield for a sufficient explanation for the existence of such a coat. Ordinarily, it is true, Jewish tunics seem to have consisted of two separate parts, which, when worn, were held together by means of

[1] *Christianity and Mythology*, pp. 414, 415.

[2] Apparently the ref. is to *De Is. et Osir.* 78, "that [vestment] of Osiris has no shadow nor variation, but (is) one, simple, the *image* of light." The above quotation is inexact.

clasps; but Josephus tells us,[1] that a single seamless tunic was worn habitually by the High Priest. It is clear from this reference, therefore, that Jewish tunics were, sometimes at least, woven all in one piece.

The writer of the Fourth Gospel certainly lays great stress upon the fact that the tunic of Jesus was seamless, and seems to imply that it had in consequence a mystical significance, perhaps that of showing that Jesus acted as His own High Priest in the sacrifice of Himself on behalf of mankind.

12. The Crucifixion.

We must now summarize as much as possible the chief remarks of Mr. Robertson and Professor Drews upon this subject.

The former alleges that there is a trace of a Talmudic Jesus, who was put to death on the eve of the Passover a century or more before the time of Pontius Pilate.[2] He then continues: "Two of the leading saviour figures of paganism were Prometheus and Heraklēs, and each of these is mythologically represented as wearing a mock crown. The myth connects the two heroes. According to Athenæus,[3] Jupiter condemned

[1] *Antiq.* III. vii. 4. [2] See Chap. VI. p. 151 f.

[3] *Deipnosophistæ*, bk. xv. 13, 16—a late writer (second to third century A.D.). The myth by this time was probably mixed with Christian and other elements.

Prometheus when he released him from captivity to wear in memory of that a crown of osiers and an iron ring; . . . and worshippers wear a crown in honour of Prometheus, thereby symbolically representing his bondage. The crown is thus a memorial of a sacrifice undergone for the good of mankind."

Again, Hēraklēs, after killing the eagle that tortured Prometheus, set out to seek the apples of the Hesperides, but eventually, at Prometheus' warning, sent Atlas for them, he meanwhile upholding the heavens in the absence of the latter (11th labour). Afterwards, at Prometheus' suggestion, Hēraklēs begged Atlas to relieve him for a moment, while he (Hēraklēs) made a wisp-pad for his head; and thus, by this subterfuge, Atlas was left to bear them for ever, and Hēraklēs ever after wore the crown [*i.e.* the wisp-pad].

As regards the narratives of the actual crucifixion of Jesus, Mr. Robertson does not deal with them from their historical point of view,[1]

[1] The words rendered 'hanging' in the E.V., Hebrew, תָּלָה (*tālāh*), Greek, *κρεμάζειν*, *κρεμᾶν*, *κρεμαννύναι* (Esth. vii. 9; Luke xxiii. 39; Acts v. 30; Gal. iii. 13), *σταυροῦν*, invariably seem to mean some form of impalement, or crucifixion — not mere *hanging* in the modern sense.

Crucifixion was introduced into Judæa apparently about the time of King Jannai, who put a number of the Pharisees to death in this way; it is believed, on good evidence, to have been derived from the Carthaginians, as *impalement* was the ordinary Eastern form of punishment. Sometimes, however, the criminal was merely tied to the cross and starved to death; but more commonly

but in a long passage, which we cannot quote *in extenso*, we are told (p. 402) that the cross was a symbol 'absolutely universal in pre-Christian times'; and, further, that it has 'a *phallic* significance.' He further says that, in Mexico, the 'Sacred Tree' was "made into a cross, on which was exposed a baked dough-image of a saviour-god, and this [image] was after a time climbed for, taken down and ceremoniously eaten."[1]

Passing on to the Burial and Resurrection, Mr. Robertson adds: "Beyond all reasonable doubt these were simple developments of those mourning rituals, which have been in use in so many ancient systems"; and he continues: "The body of the slain Osiris was searched for with lamentations, and the prepared image when found seems to have been further mourned over, and

he was literally nailed to it, either by the hands only, or by both hands and feet. In spite of the efforts of some modern critics to dispute the accuracy of the details of the Evangelists, there can be no doubt that our four accounts are substantially a correct description of this mode of punishment.

Death resulted either from exhaustion and pain, or, in the case of exceptionally strong men, from starvation, and sometimes from *tetanus*.

Few persons seem to have survived the ordeal, even when taken down and carefully tended (Jos. *Vita*, 75). After the time of Augustus, the body was subsequently given up to the friends for burial (Quint. *Decl.* vi. 6; Jos. *B.J.* IV. xv. 2). The traditional shape of the cross employed is confirmed by a third-century caricature of the crucifixion of Jesus, which was found in Rome on the Palatine Hill a few years ago.

[1] Quoting H. H. Bancroft, *Native Races of the Pacific States of North America* (1875), ii. 386, 509; and J. L. Stephens' *Central America* (1842), ii. 346.

then rejoiced over. Whatever may have been the order of the ceremony, it is certain that the burying of an image of the slain god was a regular part of it.[1] And, above all, in the cult of Mithra is the basis of the Gospel legend apparent. There the stone image of the 'God from the rock' was laid on a bier, was mourned for, was placed in his rock-tomb, and was liturgically rejoiced over."[2]

Let us now turn to Professor Drews. He says: "Is not Robertson perhaps right after all in considering the whole statement of the last fate of Jesus to be the re-writing of a dramatic Mystery play, which among the Gentile Christians of the larger cities followed the sacramental meal on Easter Day? We know what a great rôle was played by dramatic representations in numerous cults of antiquity, and how they came into special use in connection with the veneration of the suffering and rising god-redeemers.[3]

"Thus, in Egypt, the passion, death and resurrection of Osiris, and the birth of Horus; at Eleusis the searching and lamentation of Dēmētēr for her lost Persephonē, and the birth of Iacchus; at Lernæ in Argolis, and many other places, the fate of Dionysos (Zagreus); in Sicyon the sufferings of Adrastus, who threw himself on the

[1] But see Chap. VIII. p. 186, note 1.
[2] See Chap. VIII. p. 202.
[3] Cp. *Christianity and Mythology*, p. 315.

funeral pyre of his father Hercules; at Amyclæ the passing away of Nature, and its new life in the fate of Hyacinth: these were celebrated in festal pageants and scenic representations, to say nothing of the feasts of the death and resurrection of Mithras, Attis and Adonis. Certainly Matthew's account, xx.–xxviii. (with the exception of vers. 11–15 in the last chapter), with its connected sequence of events, which could not possibly [*sic*] have followed each other like this —supper, Gethsemane,[1] betrayal, passion, Peter's denial, the crucifixion, burial and resurrection— throughout gives one the impression of a chain of isolated dramatic scenes. And the close of the Gospel agrees very well with this conception, for the parting words and exhortations of Jesus to His people are a very suitable ending to a drama."[2]

Finally, he says (p. 186): "The Gospel was in origin nothing but a Judaized and spiritualized Adonis-cult." And, in the fourth footnote on the same page, he works out in brief his arguments

[1] Both Professor Drews and Mr. Robertson raise the same objection to the account of the agony in Gethsemane, viz. that Jesus is described as being *alone*, and the disciples *asleep*; therefore the latter could not have seen and heard what is reported! But surely an observant reader must see (1) that Jesus withdraws but a 'little way' (Matt. xxxvi. 39), (2) that they hear only fragments of His prayers, and (3) that they are awoke *twice* by Jesus, and each time would no doubt make an effort to keep awake for some little time at least. In any case, the three are not represented as all asleep the whole time, or as being far away from Jesus.

[2] *The Christ Myth*, 3rd ed. pp. 242, 243.

for that view: "'I am the *A* and *Ω*, the beginning and the end,' the Revelation of John makes the Messiah say (i. 8). Is there not at the same time in this a concealed reference to Adonis? The Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last letters of the Greek alphabet, form together the name of Adonis—Ao (Aoos), as the old Dorians called the god, whence Cilicia is also called Aoa. A son of Adonis and Aphrodite (Maia) is said (Schol. *Theoc.* xv. 100) to have been called Golgos. His name is connected with the phallic cones (Greek, *Golgoi*), as they were erected on heights in honour of the mother-divinities of Western Asia, who were themselves, probably on this account, called *Golgoi*, and *golgōn anassai* ('Queens of the Golgoi'), and is the same as the Hebraic plural *Golgotha* (Sepp. 'Heidenthum,' i. 157 ff.).

"Finally, was the 'place of skulls' an old Jebusite place of worship of Adonis, under the name of Golgos, and was the cone of rock on which a statue of Venus was erected in the time of Hadrian, selected for the place of execution of the Christian Saviour because it was connected with the real sacrifice of a man in the rôle of Adonis (Tammuz)?"

We will deal first of all with Professor Drews' questions and theories, as they are the more important, and form a more complete and consistent mythical theory.

He appears to hold, in particular, that on the summit of a hill just outside Jerusalem (Golgothâ) there was held, from ancient times down to the first century A.D., a worship of the vegetation-god (Adonis), and that upon this hill a phallic cone, symbolical of the god, had been set up, and also that, subsequently, a 'ritual-drama,' consisting of the mock sacrifice and death of his image (originally a *real* man was slain) was performed, and that this image was, after lamentation and burial, produced 'alive' to the people. Further, that the Gospels contain a literary *résumé* and presentment of this symbolic nature-drama expressed in pseudo-historic terms. Let us examine this theory closely.

His suggestion that a phallic emblem (Golgos?) existed once upon a hill near Jerusalem has not even a shred of historical probability in its favour. Had such a symbol ever stood there, the historians and prophets would certainly have mentioned it, as they did the high places of Ba'al, the Brazen Serpent, and other heathen symbols and worships which at various times existed in Judah.[1] We read, it is true, of certain wooden posts (*Ashērīm*, A.V., but wrongly, 'groves'), which, along with

[1] Isa. xvii. 10, 11, contains references to 'Gardens of Adonis,' which show that the northern kingdom that bordered on Syria had some taint of the Adonis-cult; and Ezek. viii. 14–18 refers to 'men worshipping the sun' (? Mithra-cult), but neither mention any 'golgoi,' nor indicate any regular and systematized Adonis-worship in either the northern or the southern kingdom.

the *Hammān-pillars*, stood by the altars of Baʿal (and Jahveh) upon the hilltops of Canaan. Oort (*Worship of the Baʿalim*), Movers (*De Phönizier*, i. p. 571), and also Collins (*Proc. of Bib. Soc. of Archæol.* xi. 291) think that these posts were *phallic* emblems, sacred to Baʿal, etc., a view which has some support in *later* Jewish tradition. But the latest modern scholarship rejects this view, and Dr. Moore says (*Ency. Bibl.*, art. 'Asherah') 'the shape of an Ashērāh is unknown.'[1]

Neither can we find any reference to Adonis in the words 'I am Alpha and Omega,' etc. *A* and *Ω* do not form the 'first and last' letters of Eōs (= Aōs) as it was written by the *Ionian* Greeks, though they are the first and last letters of the Greek alphabet, to which the common interpretation refers them.[2] Indeed, we profoundly distrust Professor Drews' etymologies here. Cilicia, the 'land of the dawn,' or East, was sometimes called Aōa (Eōa) by the Greeks; but this fact appears to have no connection whatever with Adonis as a vegetation-god, but to be derived from the Greek goddess Eōs (= Aōs), who was a *daughter* of the Titan Hyperion and Theia.

It is unlikely, therefore, that the Dorian Greeks applied the same name, Aō(s), to the goddess of the dawn, and to the (male) spirit of vegetation (Adonis). And why does Professor Drews quote

[1] These all seem to have disappeared *after* the exile.

[2] Cp. similar use in Isa. xliv. 6, and xlviii. 12, of this phrase.

the Doric form of the name, rather than that in use among the Ionians who lived in the very midst of these nature-cults of Asia Minor, and spelled the name Ēō(s)?

Furthermore, there would seem to be no possible affinity between Golgothâ and Golgos, except that of alliterative assonance, the former being derived from some *Semitic* root, while the latter would seem to be of *Aryan* origin. In Theocritus, *Idylls*, XV. 100, Γολγώς (Γολγοί) is coupled with Ἰδάλιον, and is obviously a *town*, the two places being seats of the worship of the Cyprian Aphrodite. Of course, the people of the town *may* have claimed descent from an eponymous ancestor Golgos, and, therefore, called themselves Golgoi; but this possibility does not affect our conclusion.

On the other hand, Golgothâ (= Gülgotha)—said by the editor of 'Matthew' to mean the place of a skull (*not* 'skulls')—has been variously derived from the Hebrew *gü(u)lgolet* (√*gālāl*, 'to roll') and *gol goatha* (Jer. xxxi. 39), (?) 'hill of dying'; but the actual derivation and meaning is probably unknown. Perhaps it was a place of Jewish execution for criminals long before the time of Christ.

There cannot, however, be any real and etymological connection between 'Golgothâ' and 'Golgos'; accordingly any such theory is wholly fanciful, and based upon preconceptions which

are unhistorical. Professor Drews' further speculation that the various narratives relating to the Supper, Gethsemane, Betrayal, Passion, Crucifixion, Burial and Resurrection read like so many scenes in a Mystery drama can be answered by the fact that there is no proof that such representations were ever in vogue amongst the Jews of that period, or amongst the earliest Christians of the first century; there is no record, or trace, of any such dramas, and the equally important fact that the supposed parallels, viz. those of Adonis, Osiris, Dēmētēr, etc., have an entirely different *motif* underlying them, we have already endeavoured to make clear. Consequently these latter cults were at all times freely tolerated by the Roman authorities, whilst the Christian religion was discouraged and persecuted—a fact in itself indicative of the great difference between them.

Next, turning to Mr. Robertson's views, we repeat, in the first place, that the Talmudic Jesus is, almost without doubt, the Jesus of the Gospels. The agreement between them, as the reader will have observed—despite the slanders and misrepresentations of the writers—is so remarkable that we feel their references cannot be to any other than the Jesus of the Synoptic writers.[1]

Again, Mr. Robertson's parallels with the myths of Prometheus and Hēraklēs are almost

[1] Chap. VI. pp. 136, 137.

too absurd to be taken seriously. It is only necessary to compare the supposed life-stories of these demi-gods with the story of Jesus to see this. They are wholly different both in general conception and in detail. Prometheus was ultimately released, and the benefits which he was said to have conferred upon mankind were chiefly the procuring of fire from heaven. Further, the adroit manner in which Hēraklēs outwits Atlas is unworthy of comparison with any of the acts of Jesus, while the 'wisp-pad' is no analogue of the crown of thorns. Finally, as regards the 'phallic significance' of the Cross—a statement frequently and recklessly made—it is a pity that Mr. Robertson does not state precisely upon what evidence his assertion is based.[1] As it stands, it is a mere assertion, depending, it would seem, upon other very questionable hypotheses, and not supported by any actual proofs. We have been unable to find any connection whatever with so unsavoury (not to say disgusting) an emblem as the phallus. That the Cross was a very general *symbol*, with a definite meaning of a mystical character, amongst many races, and in many lands, is well

[1] The Egyptian *ankh* (a handled cross) seems to have been in Egypt a very ancient and *mystical* symbol of life. In like manner, in the ethnic *nature-cults*, a coarser symbol of life and fertility was the *phallus*. But these facts do not establish the 'phallic significance of the Cross'! The two symbols were quite distinct and independent.

known, as we will see in the next chapter. But that is a wholly different matter, and does not affect the question.

With regard to Mr. Robertson's citation of Mr. Bancroft's *Native Races of the Pacific States of North America*, vol. ii. pp. 309, 386, an examination of that work has failed to verify these references. Mr. Bancroft, however, states (p. 321) that at the festival of Huitzilopochtli, the Mexican god of war, a life-sized image of the god was made of wicker-work, and covered with a dough made of amaranth and other seeds. A paper cap set with plumes was then placed upon the head of the idol.

And again (pp. 330, 331), he says, that the Tepanecs had a festival in which 'a bird of dough' was placed at the top of a huge tree. "Women dressed in the finest garments, and holding small dough idols in their hands, danced round the pole, while the youths struggled wildly to reach and knock down the bird image." There is nothing whatever said, it will be observed, about a dough figure affixed to a sacred tree made into a cross, or of the figure being ceremoniously eaten, and what possible connection these two ceremonies can have with either the Crucifixion, or the Eucharist, it would be extremely difficult to say.

Yet again, as regards his reference to Stephen's *Central America*, ii. 346, we find (*loc. cit.*) a

mention of a *stone* tablet found in an ancient building there. "The principal subject of the tablet," says Mr. Stephens, "is the cross. It is surmounted by a strange bird, and loaded with indescribable ornaments. The two figures [males] are evidently those of important personages. . . . Both are looking towards the cross [? or at each other], and one seems in the act of making an offering, perhaps of a child;[1] all speculations on the subject are, of course, entitled to little regard; but perhaps it would not be wrong to ascribe to these personages a sacerdotal character."

Mr. Stephens likewise adds, further on: "Our friends the padres, at the sight of it, immediately decided that the old inhabitants of Palenque were Christians, and by conclusions, which are sometimes called 'jumping,' they fixed the age of the buildings in the third century."

It would seem that nowadays also there are other persons, who, like these padres, reach various conclusions upon these subjects by the 'jumping' method. And, considering that the whole tablet bears not the least resemblance to a crucifixion scene (there is, *e.g.*, no figure on the cross), and that the original use of the building is unknown, no conclusions can be drawn from the relic. Above all, it lends no support to those

[1] The present writer can see no resemblance whatever to a child in the object depicted in the plate. It seems more like something of a vegetable nature, perhaps maize.

which Mr. Robertson wishes to draw from it. As for the cross itself, Mr. Stephens wisely remarks that Dupaix "accounts for the appearance of the cross by the argument that it was known, and had a symbolical meaning among ancient nations, long before it was established as the emblem of the Christian faith." [1]

13. The Descent to Hades.[2]

Mr. Robertson says that this idea "is familiar in the Mysteries of Dionysus, who descended into Hades to bring back his mother, Semelē, and carry her to heaven."

The idea of a 'descent' into the realms of the dead was undoubtedly very familiar to men in pagan antiquity. Thus we have, *e.g.*, the descents of Istar, Orpheus, Odysseus, Æneas and others;

[1] We may, perhaps, add here a few other mythical 'identifications.' Mr. Robertson also connects Simon of Cyrene with Samson (!), whose exploits are again compared with those of Hēraklēs, and referred to the invariable sun-myth. But, as Dr. Estlin Carpenter observes, the names 'have no linguistic connection.' Neither are their exploits alike! Weidel also tries to show (*Studien und Kritiken*, 1912, pp. 167–286) that the Synoptic account of the sufferings and death of Jesus is largely unhistorical and based upon an interest in Old Testament prophecies. The '*Warheit*,' in short, is overlaid with '*Dichtung*,' even in Mark. Ahithophel supplies the type of Judas; Joseph and his two fellow-prisoners are the types of Jesus and the two thieves crucified along with Him; Daniel immured in the lions' den is a type of Jesus in the tomb, and so on. It is all very fanciful and, as a rule, very far-fetched.

[2] *Christianity and Mythology*, p. 249 f.

and the *motive* in these undertakings was generally either to bring back to earth, or to consult in person, some beloved relative, or friend, who had departed this life.

But Jesus, in the scanty references which we have relating to this event, is not represented as doing anything of the kind. In the Gospels and Acts, and the Pauline Epistles, the 'descent' is not mentioned at all, and possibly not even implied. But the later writer of 1 Pet. iii. 9 states that Jesus, between His death and resurrection, went to Hades, and there "preached to the spirits in prison" [? to the spirits of the dead]. But we have no very early, and no other canonical, authority for this belief; and, in any case, the object was entirely different from the 'descents' recorded in the pagan myths.

14. The Ascension.[1]

This important narrative is dismissed by Mr. Robertson in a contemptuous and cavalier fashion. It is, he says, "obviously a fable born of ignorance. Only in a world living under the primitive delusion of a flat earth, and a solid over-reaching firmament could such a fable have been framed."

He then quotes various pagan parallels: Kṛishna thus mounts to the firmament of Indra.

[1] *Christianity and Mythology*, p. 420.

At Byblos the dead Adonis was believed to rise on the second day and mount to heaven in the presence of his worshippers.[1] Hēraklēs, in turn, rises to heaven and immortality from the funeral pyre, which in his case rounds the myth,[2] the suggestion coming "from the spectacle of the litten clouds at sunset."

It is, of course, well-known that the concept of a passage from this material world to a co-existent *spiritual* universe has been always depicted in both art and literature as an *ascension in space.* But such descriptions have always had a greater or less degree of symbolical meaning, except in the cases of ruder races and more uneducated persons. And even in the cases of persons and races, who have made considerable advances in culture and the power of thought, there is a convenience in this mode of representation which it would be difficult to dispense with. Hence, no doubt, its use by the simple and comparatively uneducated folk, who were the earliest teachers and professors of the Christian religion. Perhaps they took it quite literally, and in a sense which provokes Mr. Robertson's contempt, just as, no doubt, they held "the primitive delusion of a flat earth and a solid over-

[1] Lucian, *De Syr. Dea*, 6. See Chap. VIII. p. 191.

[2] Ref. to W. Robertson Smith, *Relig. Sem.*, pp. 373, 469. Many others might have been cited, but the question is—How far are they analogous?

arching firmament." But that is really not the important point here. What the writer is trying to impress upon his readers is, that Jesus after death passed over from this lower and material to *a higher and spiritual mode of existence*. And he expresses this teaching by the only possible means by which both he and his readers can grasp it. On the other hand, we twentieth-century readers are better circumstanced. Many of us, at least, have been trained in the principles of abstract thought and, therefore, these cruder symbolizations are less necessary in our case. And if we have learnt that space is probably—in some of its aspects—largely a mere *form* of our perceptive faculties, we can dimly understand that the passage from a *material* to a *spiritual* world may not be a matter of actual spatial transition at all. Still, it is even now a convenience to us to make use of symbolic imagery such as this.

But Mr. Robertson is not altogether happy, even in his mythical parallels. He omits to note, for instance, that Hēraklēs was carried off from the funeral pyre *before* death, and therefore in the same physical body. Jesus, on the other hand, had undergone a *change*, the Gospel writers tell us. And this change, according to St. Paul's teaching, must have been the transmutation of the 'natural body' (σῶμα ψυχικόν) into the 'spiritual body' (σῶμα πνευματικόν), that is to say, a *tran-*

scendence of a previous state—a change from the material to the spiritual.

The case of Adonis, too, is not to the point. No one ever witnessed, or ever stated that he actually witnessed, the 'ascensions' of these 'gods,' or perhaps more properly, 'nature-spirits.' They were really not 'ascensions,' in the strict sense of the term at all. They symbolized the *rebirth* and the gradual regrowth of the vegetation, or the return of the once dying sun, and as such form no proper parallels to the death and resurrection and ascension of Jesus Christ.

CHAPTER XII.

CHRISTIAN SYMBOLISM: ITS ORIGIN AND USE.

THE *CROSS*, THE *LAMB* AND THE *FISH* (*Ἰχθύς*).

We have selected for examination here what are probably the three earliest and most important Christian symbols.

In all religious associations of every country, and in every age, the members have doubtless made use of certain signs which have a definite and peculiar meaning. And chief amongst these signs, which in historic times were numerous, was the mark or representation, in wood, or stone, or metal, of the *Cross*. That this mystical symbol is of very great antiquity and of widespread use is undoubted, though Mr. Robertson probably exaggerates when he avers that it was 'universal.'

Thus, we find it used in ancient Egpyt, particularly in the cult of Isis and her son Horus. Its use is also met with in Assyria and Persia, where it was worn by both kings and priests. Amongst the Greeks it seems to have been

placed on the images of such gods as Apollo, Artemis and Dēmētēr. In Rome it was worn, partly as an ornament, by the vestal virgins, and, subsequently to the rise of Christianity, it was placed—in the shape of the so-called 'monogram'[1]—upon the *Labara*, or standards, of the later Roman Empire.

Amongst the Norsemen, again, we meet with the Cross in Runic inscriptions, and as Thor's hammer, and even amongst the ancient Israelites the mystic mark made in blood upon the door-posts of the house, before the eating of the Passover, has been supposed by some writers (though upon no very sufficient grounds) to have been a cross, whilst others have recognized the same symbol in the attitude of Moses, when he stood upon the hilltop with outspread arms watching the battle between Israel and Amalek. Finally, it has even been met with in the ruins of an ancient civilization of the New World, as we saw in the last chapter.

Besides this religious, or, perhaps more strictly speaking, mystical, use of the Cross, there was, as

[1] Deissmann says (*Light from the East*, p. 251, note 3) that "the so-called monogram of Christ (☧) has been in use long before the time of Christ."

Some have regarded the Cross as a symbol anciently used in astral worship, expressive of the sun's *crossing* the equinoctial line, thereby bringing annually saving heat and light to the world, and thus stimulating the development of both the vegetable and animal life. This is a not improbable view.

we have seen, a restricted employment of it as an instrument of capital punishment, chiefly in the western parts of Asia and Northern Africa, and in the eastern and southern parts of Europe. As a development of the primitive *stake*, which served for purposes of impalement, we meet with the Cross thus used in three different shapes: the *crux immissa* (†), the *crux commissa* (T), and the *crux decussata* (X). No fixed principle in the employment of these various forms is discoverable, for they seem to have been employed indifferently at the caprice of the official charged with the execution of the criminal.

As regards the meaning of the Cross, in a mystical sense, it is probable that we can best reach its original signification by a consideration of its use among the numerous symbols of ancient Egypt from whence perhaps it was spread amongst later civilizations in various other parts of the ancient world.[1] In Egypt we find it exclusively in the form of the *ankh*—a tau-shaped cross furnished with a loop affixed to the top of the horizontal bar for the purpose of suspension, or as a handle, by which it might be grasped, as seen in the representations of the various deities. The symbol *ankh* has in Egypt the meaning of

[1] Lipsius (*De Cruce*, i. 7) argues that it is of Phœnician origin. If that be the case, it is remarkable that the instrument of bodily death, and the symbol of eternal spiritual life, should originate from the same source and take the same form.

'life,' or 'soul,' and, in Egyptian art, it is the emblem of *enduring life*.

We may take it, therefore, that the Cross, in whatever shape it was used in a symbolical sense, had the same signification, in a higher or lower degree in the minds of all races amongst whom it has been found.

Now it cannot be doubted that the Christian use of this symbol is, in part, a borrowed one; at the same time, however, it has also an original signification. For, on the one hand, the early Christians must have been quite familiar with its use as an old symbol of *life*, while on the other they knew it to be the instrument by means of which their Master and Founder had paid the penalty of His life. And since, according to early and apostolic teaching, the death on the Cross was but the prelude to an eternal life for mankind, to be attained by them also only by self-denial and suffering, it was but natural that the symbolic use of the Cross, in the signification of *life in death*, should grow up at an early period in the Christian Church. It was, in fact, like so many other Christian concepts and practices, not wholly original; but, like them, when once adopted, it was used to a large extent in an entirely new and original sense. It symbolized, in short, the profound and everlasting truth, first made perfectly clear to the world by the teaching and example of Jesus Christ, that *all* higher life is

only to be attained by man through the suffering and death of the lower life, a fact persistently pressed home in the teaching of Our Lord Himself.[1]

The symbol of the *Lamb* has also a history reaching far back into the twilight of human records. Without doubt, however, its Christian use is directly connected with, and largely derived from the sacrificial side of the Jewish Paschal feast. Whether this institution was derived ultimately from an ancient spring festival of the sun is another matter, and, in any case, beyond the scope of this inquiry. It is not improbable, however, that, in the early Jewish Church, the commemoration of a great national deliverance from bondage was combined with an old solar festival connected with the vernal equinox; just as in the Christian Church, as we have seen, the birth of Jesus was officially fixed, in the fourth century, as contemporary with the beginning of a new solar year, immediately after the hibernal solstice. This fact, however—if it be a fact—does not prove, or even indicate, that either the Jewish or the Christian festivals were nothing but mere transformed survivals of an ancient solar worship, as many now seek to prove.

We can easily understand the reasons which

[1] Cp. especially Matt. x. 38, xvi. 24, xviii. 24, 25; Mark viii. 34; Luke ix. 23, xiv. 27, etc.

prompted the early Christian communities to identify Jesus with the Paschal Lamb. Apart from the fact that He was put to death by the religious leaders of their nation, at the time of their great national festival, the efficacy of an atonement by means of blood was, through the beliefs of ages, deeply ingrained into their minds, and the teaching of Jesus Himself had confirmed this view. The earliest apostolic preaching—if we may trust Acts ii. 24—was simply 'Jesus of Nazareth . . . whom God hath *raised from the dead*'; but very soon the sacrificial aspect of His death forced itself upon their attention, though, perhaps, still in a sense subordinate to the great fact of the Resurrection, and all that that fact implied. But it is, above all, in the writings of St. Paul that we find these two events set forth on equal terms, and co-ordinated in importance. 'Christ *died* for our sins,' writes St. Paul to the Corinthians;[1] and, again, writing to the Romans, he adds the necessary corollary, that 'Jesus . . . was *raised* for our justification.'[2] The inference to be drawn from the Paschal analogue, strengthened by the fact that a lamb was also the sin-offering which a Nazarite must bring before Jahveh,[3] was irresistible, and the symbol of the Lamb would naturally be seized upon for representing Jesus more particularly in the sacrificial aspect of His mission.

[1] 1 Cor. xv. 3. [2] Rom. iv. 25. [3] Num. vi. 14.

But Professor Drews here launches forth into a theory, which is based upon an hypothetical and etymological connection between the two words *Agnus* ('lamb') and *Agni* ('fire'—as a god), with a view to showing the purely pagan nature, and origin, of the symbol. He says:[1] "The Latin expression for lamb (*Agnus*) also expresses its relation to the ancient fire-god, and its sanctity as a sacrificial animal. For its root is connected with *ignis* (Sanskṛit, *Agni*, the purifying 'fire,' and *yagna*, 'victim'), and also, according to Festus Pompeius, with the Greek *hagnos*, 'pure,' 'consecrated,' and *hagnistes*, 'expiator.' In this sense," he adds, "*Agnus Dei*, the Lamb of God, as Christ is very frequently called, is, in fact, nothing else than *Agni Deus*, since *Agnus stands in a certain measure as the Latin translation for Agni.*"[2]

But we have no confidence in Professor Drews' derivations and etymologies here, upon which his whole theory is based. He connects directly *Agnus* with *Agni*; and the words at least resemble one another superficially, and in sound. But according to the eminent philologer and Sanskṛitist, Professor Whitney, *Agnus* is a syncopated form of '*avignus*' (avis, older form of *ovis*, 'sheep'), and this latter word means literally the 'sheep-born' (*i.e. ovi-(g)-natus*), the word

[1] *The Christ Myth*, 3rd ed. p. 144.

[2] Citing Burnouf, *La Science des Religions*, p. 186 f. Italics ours.

for 'sheep' appearing in Sanskṛit as *avi*, and in Greek as ὄϜις (ὄις).[1]

On the other hand, *Agni* is derived from a Sanskṛit root *ag* (Latin, agilis, 'agile'), 'to move quickly,' and signifies 'fire,' which was in ancient times supposed to be the manifestation of an active but invisible spirit dwelling in the wood. "Men were struck most by his quick movements, his sudden appearances and disappearances, and so they called him the *quick*, or *agile*, in Sanskṛit *Agnis*, in Latin Ignis."[2]

We may, therefore, safely infer from these and other facts that there is no direct connection, etymologically or otherwise, between *Agnus* and *Agni*, and, if this be so, Professor Drews' equating of Agnus Dei ('Lamb of God') with Agni Deus ('Agni [is] God') is quite untenable, and that he has no real warrant for affirming that the yearly celestial phenomenon of "the victory of the sun-fire (Agni) over the night of winter, and the resurrection of nature to a new life," found "its reflection in the sacrifice on earth of a lamb."[3] Indeed, it would seem to be more correct to say that the fertile imagination of primitive man tried

[1] The Sanskṛit root is said to be *av*, Latin, servare, tueri. See Curtius, 596.

[2] Max Müller, *Lectures on the Origin of Religion*, p. 212. The *god* Agni was regarded as the carrier to the gods of the volatile *essence* of the sacrifice, and in *that* sense was viewed as a Mediator between them and mankind.

[3] *The Christ Myth*, 3rd ed. p. 145.

to picture in the phenomena of the heavens a *reflection* of his life and experiences upon earth, though, no doubt, afterwards he came to look upon the former as the abiding reality, while the latter was but a mere copy of the original.

The designation of Christ, therefore, as 'the Lamb of God' first arose when the recognition of the sacrificial nature of the death of Jesus dawned upon the mind of the early Church, while the reference to a 'lamb' was due partly to the fact that this animal was *par excellence* the sacrificial victim of all pastoral races, and partly because, owing to its mild and innocent nature, it appeared to them to suffer uncomplainingly, and in a sense unjustly. In short, in the early Church, the Lamb came to be looked upon as the *type* of Jesus, the meek Sufferer, and Jesus as the *antitype* of the sacrificial lamb.

The *Fish* (*Ἰχθύς*) has also been employed since a very early date of the Christian era as a symbol of Christ. The word *Ἰχθύς* has generally been explained as an anagram formed out of the initial letters of the five following words, *Ἰησοῦς Χριστὸς Θεοῦ Υἱὸς Σωτήρ* ('Jesus Christ, Son of God, Saviour').

But it is very improbable that this was the actual and sole origin of the symbolic use of the Fish by the early Christians, since it undoubtedly dates back to very much earlier times, as a pagan symbol.

Thus, in Babylonia we find the primeval deity Eâ, the god of water and life, represented as a fish-like being who was said to have issued in the remote past from out of the waters of the Persian Gulf to teach the early inhabitants of Babylonia the arts of life and civilization.

In Egypt, too, Horus, the son of Osiris, was styled 'the divine Fish,' and was represented as having a fish-tail, and holding in his hand the *ankh*, the symbol of life and immortality. Fishes were also, in Syria, considered to be sacred to the goddess Atargate, who was a form of Astarte. Two other examples, however, as to the sacred character of the Fish, quoted by Professor Drews, are of questionable value. Thus, it is not certain that Dagon was a fish-god at all, or that he was depicted in a fish-like form. Philo of Byblius derives his name from *dagan*, 'corn,' and makes him a farmer's god (Ζεὺς ἀρότριος), while the statement that his idol was fish-shaped, as regards its lower extremities, does not rest upon any very ancient authority.

It is also doubtful whether in 'Joshua, the son of Nun,' we have any reference to a fish, as we have already stated.[1]

How far any of these facts influenced the early Christians in choosing the fish as symbol of Christ, it is extremely difficult to say. It is, however, by no means improbable that they did

[1] See Chap. VII. p. 162 f.

so, possibly to a considerable extent. If these old myths were then widely known in tradition, and folk-lore, as is most probable, then we can easily imagine that the mental picture of Jesus rising out of the baptismal waters of the Jordan, to teach men the rules of the higher spiritual life, would inevitably suggest some sort of parallel with Eâ, who was said to have issued from the Persian Gulf to teach mankind the higher earthly life. And the fact that several of the Apostles themselves were fishermen would also tend in the same direction, whilst the initial letters of the name Jesus, and His common titles, would very soon form themselves noticeably into the anagram *Ἰχθύς*.

In any case, the *tesseræ* (members' tickets) given to the baptized catechumens as tokens, or marks, of the benefits and rights conferred in baptism were very frequently made in the shape of a fish.

But it may here be asked, what need was there for such a complex system of symbolism as we find amongst the earlier Christian communities? What use did it serve at that time, and why did they adopt a symbolic system which had been associated for a long period with so many heathen cults?

The reasons for its adoption were, no doubt, principally two in number. In the first place, it expressed, as in the case of the nature-cults, in a

simple and convenient, as well as pictorial form, the main outlines of Christian doctrine.

The symbols themselves, indeed, formed object-lessons, which were early comprehended and remembered by the simple folk who had accepted the new Gospel, and who, moreover, had been habituated to a symbolic system of expression for unnumbered generations.

And, secondly, they served as signs and pass-words whereby Christian strangers might recognize one another, while, at the same time, owing to their use by non-Christians also, they were not likely to betray their holders to the hostile pagan world in which they had to live. The latter reason, it must be remembered, was of the highest importance in the days, when to be a Christian was practically to declare oneself, *ipso facto*, an enemy to the Roman State.

Accordingly, we find that the adoption and use of symbols developed amongst Christians to a remarkable degree, throughout the whole of the second and third centuries, the great eras of struggle and actual persecution, though at the same time it cannot be doubted that they were also used, to a considerable extent at least, during the latter part of the first century of the Christian era.

CONCLUSION.

In summarizing the main results of the foregoing analysis it will be advisable to confine ourselves chiefly to the three main points of our thesis : (i) that the *Christ* of St. Paul is identical with the Jesus of the Synoptists ; (ii) that the *Jesus* of the Synoptists is an historical Person, and not an ancient cult-god, either Jewish or pagan ; and (iii) that the *Jesus Christ* of primitive Christianity is no mere idea, which, either in the mind of St. Paul, or in that of the early Christian community, was subsequently 'precipitated' and historicized as an unreal and pseudo-historical figure, the supposed Founder of the Christian Church.

(i) St. Paul—whom Professor Drews at least allows to be an historical personality of primal importance in the earliest Christian Church—was no doubt, when living in Tarsus, perfectly familiar with the *idea* underlying the various heathen cults which were practised by the people of Asia Minor. But that he did not include Christianity among them seems perfectly plain for many reasons.

In the first place, St. Paul himself was born 'a Pharisee of the Pharisees,' trained under Gamaliel, the most famous Rabbi of that period. His whole education and sympathies, therefore, were with official Judaism ; and from this attitude, in a certain sense, he never departed. For he states definitely that he accepted the teachings of Christianity, and the Person of Christ, as a fulfilment of the *Law*—not as a system foreshadowed in, or connected in any way with, some natural religion, or cult-worship.

This is a primary and important point, and consequently demands the closest attention in any consideration of the matter. Had the analogy of some one of the nature-cults been the means of bringing him over to the new faith, and of diverting that faith in his mind, to some extent, into a new channel, he would certainly have laid much stress upon these cult-systems and their great significance for the true understanding of the mission of Christ. But, we repeat, he does not do this. On the contrary, he continually adverts to the Mosaic Law as the preparation for the Gospel—the 'schoolmaster' which led men to Christ ; and Christ, again, as the 'fulfilment' of that Law. Indeed, he never once makes mention of these widespread cults of a 'dying and rising Saviour,' which clearly shows that in his mind they had no connection whatever with the Christ of the Gospels.

To this significant fact may be added another, which points to the same conclusion, viz. that St. Paul's whole conception of the expected Christ does not in the least harmonize with the portrait of the young and beautiful Adonis of the Græco-Syrian peoples, with whose form and attributes he was doubtless quite familiar.

Again; the great difficulty which St. Paul encountered in his proclamation of the Gospel, amongst both Jews and Gentiles, was not the unwillingness of either people to admit that a god might become a man, and, indeed, had done so. To the Greeks especially this idea was very familiar, at least in a somewhat crude form. And even the Jews were to some extent prepared for such teaching by their Messianic expectations, and by the anthropomorphic Theophanies which were so frequently recorded in the later portions of their Pentateuch. On the contrary, the great difficulty with both Jew and Gentile was a realization of the fact that a Man, who was practically an obscure and despised Galilean Peasant, had really proved Himself to be, in some entirely new and peculiar sense, the Son of God. Indeed, as a matter of undeniable fact, Christian and Ethnic thought on this subject moved in quite opposite directions from the very outset; in the Ethnic cults the thought-movement was wholly *from the idea to its personification*; in Christianity it is *from the Person to His idealization*, that is to say,

from the idea of a *human Jesus* onwards to the realization of this same human Jesus as One who is found by experience to be the *heavenly Christ.* He appears, in fact, to His disciples first of all in the guise of a son of man, and then reveals Himself gradually, and as they are able to receive it, by His works and final resurrection from the dead, as the Son of God. Consequently this development is a complete inversion of the whole course of thought-movement which runs through each of the pagan cults where the object of worship *starts* with the postulate of divinity, while he *ends* by a self-evident proof of human nature.

Furthermore, not only does St. Paul, in all his discussions and arguments with opponents, take for granted the actual existence of an historical Christ, the details of whose life are still quite fresh in the minds of men, but he also lays claim to have received (like the other Apostles) his commission directly from this living personal Christ.

The Twelve Apostles, it is clear, *at first* based their claim to some kind of superiority, or at least precedence, upon the fact that they had been personal companions of Jesus, and had been commissioned directly by Him. St. Paul, on the other hand, while he allows that he had not 'known Christ' in the flesh, as they had, asserts that nevertheless Christ had 'appeared' to him

in an objective form, and had commissioned him also; and that he was 'the least of the Apostles' only because, in the times of his ignorance, he had been guilty of 'persecuting the Church of God.' In all other respects, however, he maintains, he is on a footing of perfect equality with them.

Again; Professor Drews, as we have already noted, strongly urges that when St. Paul mentions the 'brethren of the Lord' (1 Cor. ix. 5; Gal. i. 19) he is referring only to members of a cult-community, and not the blood-relatives of any historic man.

But the context to these references does not indicate any such interpretation; for in that same context he draws a firm, though incidental, distinction between the two classes. He distinguishes between 'the brethren of the Lord' and 'the other Apostles,' as also Cephas and himself and Barnabas. There are plainly two different categories referred to here—blood-relatives, and disciples unrelated by blood. In the Synoptic narratives, too, we read of the 'brethren' of Jesus; but the Twelve, or the Seventy, are *never* so styled.

Finally, when Professor Drews dogmatically and off-hand dismisses every clear reference in the Pauline Letters to the historic Christ, as a 'later insertion,' we reach the very negation of all sound textual and historical criticism, the first

and foremost rule of which is, that there must be some definite authority of an objective nature for such rejection, an authority, indeed, which is less subjective and more trustworthy than the mere fact that the passages excised are inconvenient for, and inconsistent with, some particular and preconceived scheme of interpretation.

In short, to deny, or even ignore, St. Paul's references to the historical nature and reality of Christ is absolutely fatal to the whole system of his spiritual teaching; for, as we have seen, while, on the one hand, he regards Him as the antitype of the offered victim in the sacrificial system of the Jewish legal code, on the other he consistently re-echoes in spirit, and sometimes even in word, the sublime and original teaching of Jesus—teaching which, by the almost universal consent of mankind, Christian and non-Christian, is unique in the history of the world, and which, in fact, can only have been formulated in the mind of One who was directly sent by God, and commissioned to give to men in His own name a rule of life infinitely superior to any which had hitherto been conceived by, or communicated to, mankind.

(ii) That the Jesus of the Synoptists is an historical Person, and not the mere ideal representative of some ancient cult-god, is the only really adequate explanation of the evidence which

is now available. We repeat once more that the whole development of the *Gospel idea* in the Synoptists clearly shows this. They begin with Jesus, the Man of Galilee,[1] the Teacher of Righteousness; they then pass on to the Divine Healer of those who are sick in body or soul; and, finally, they end with a revelation of the Jesus who has overcome death, and over whom —unlike the various cult-gods who had to die annually—'death hath no more dominion.'

Equally significant, too, for the present question, is the fact that in Mark, which we believe to be the earliest and most primitive extant record of the life of Jesus, He is represented, almost all throughout the Gospel, as being misunderstood by both His followers and His relatives. Even His closest intimates amongst the Twelve failed utterly to grasp the true explanation of His being and mission.

The cult-gods, on the other hand, from the very outset are regarded as, in their nature and degree, superhuman and divine, and, therefore, are not comparable, in this respect, with the Jesus of the Gospels.

To the above considerations we may also add another weighty fact. The typical and early Hebraic-Christian view, which persisted for some generations amongst the Ebionites of the first

[1] The Birth narratives in two of the Synoptics were added later.

century, was that He was simply a human being, and no god in any sense of the word. And the mere existence of the Ebionite sect, and their acceptance of Jesus as a Teacher of righteousness, and, it may be, as a temporal Messiah of some kind, is a strong testimony to His historicity and personality. And this, again, agrees entirely with the order of development of conceptions regarding the Personality of Jesus; the Ebionites, representing the most primitive and conservative section of the followers of Jesus, stuck resolutely to their first impressions of Him, which were formed during the earlier days of His actual ministry.

(iii) Professor Smith, and—following his lead—Professor Drews, as we have noted, lay great stress upon the phrase *τὰ περὶ τοῦ Ἰησοῦ*[1] ('*the things of Jesus*'), as undoubtedly indicating the existence of some secret doctrines relative to a pre-Christian cult-god named 'Jesus.' But, turning to the context of this passage, we soon see that this vague phrase (especially vague in the bald translation of the A.V.) really means nothing whatever of the sort. It refers[2] merely to the fundamental difference which existed between the baptismal teaching of John the Baptist and that of St. Paul and the other Apostles. John had baptized with 'the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins'; the

[1] Acts xviii. 24. [2] See Acts xix. 1–5.

Apostles added to this the gift of the Holy Spirit, by whose aid alone such repentance could become actually operative and effectual in the future. And since that was the case, a belief in, and a knowledge of, this operation of the Holy Spirit was necessary for the Christian. Hence, 'the baptism of John' was so far defective, and needed supplementing by a more perfect system. There seems to be, therefore, in this phrase, no reference whatever to any secret and pre-Christian cult-doctrines.

And, indeed, the whole hypothesis of the 'precipitation' of these alleged cult-doctrines regarding an *ideal* Jesus, and their concrete embodiment in a pseudo-historical and *real* Jesus, is both unprovable and improbable. We do not know that such doctrines, or such an *idea*, ever existed amongst the Jews at *any* period of their history, and the whole historical process of its development, as postulated by the mythicist, is opposed both to the known order of the growth of Christian doctrine in the mind of St. Paul, and also the historic development of the Church. Had the former, indeed, passed through any such phase of thought as Professor Drews supposes, he would undoubtedly have seized upon, and made great use of, the figure of the Suffering Servant as portraying the future Christ. But this he never does; he nowhere in his Letters identifies the Christ of the Gospels with this 'Servant'; and this

fact alone goes a long way towards proving that St. Paul had never recognized such an identity, and that it had not been recognized by any Jews of that or any previous time. They had invariably looked for a victorious and living Messiah, and the only analogue which would be possible to the mind of St. Paul, or any other Jew, was the lamb which was slain at the Passover, a sacrifice which, St. Paul came finally to realize, in many respects typified the crucified Christ.

But the conclusions of Professor Drews, and the various other members of this mythical school, with regard to the non-historical character of Jesus, are by no means shared by the majority of workers in the field of early religious beliefs and customs. In this department of theology and anthropology there is no greater authority than Dr. Frazer. We may, therefore, with some advantage, refer to his conclusions with reference to this important question : "The historical reality both of Buddha and Christ," he says,[1] "has sometimes been doubted, or denied. It would be just as reasonable to question the historic existence of Alexander the Great and Charlemagne on account of the legends which have gathered round them.

"The great religious movements which have stirred humanity to its depths, and altered the

[1] *Attis, Adonis, Osiris*, p. 202 note.

belief of nations, spring ultimately from the conscious and deliberate efforts of extraordinary minds, not from the blind unconscious co-operation of the multitude. The attempt to explain history without the influence of great men may flatter the vanity of the vulgar, but it will find no favour with the philosophical historian."

We believe that these words express a most profound and important truth, even though it is the prevailing fashion at the present time to undervalue and even to deny it. Every great religion of the past has been undoubtedly the work of a personal Founder and Originator, and without such a person to initiate it, that religion would never have been. And the success, or non-success, of any religion has ever been in direct ratio to the spiritual genius and the magnetic Personality of its originator. This latter fact is also clearly recognized by a modern writer, whom we may perhaps also quote in connection with this subject.

"Even if one were to concede that all the recorded sayings and doings of Jesus are fabrications (a wildly absurd hypothesis) there remains a common element in them, a unity of tone and character which points to a well-known and clearly marked personality behind them, whose actual existence is further implied by the Christian movement. In other words, whether true or false in detail, the statements of the Gospels, if we know how to use them aright, establish for us the

historicity of Jesus, and leave no sort of doubt as to his personality, and the impression he made upon all those who came into contact with him."[1]

The test of *Personality* is, indeed, the supreme and final one, which we must apply to check all our historical evidence and conclusions. The stories which have come down to us of the various mythic 'Saviours' with whom Jesus has been equated by the mythicist, have a vagueness and an unreality about them, when compared with the natural and life-like portrait which is drawn, with many minor variations, in the Synoptic Gospels. It is, for example, impossible to depict clearly in one's mind the figure of an Adonis, or an Osiris, or a Mithra, as an actual living *man*. They are all unreal, shadowy figures, without content or substance, and elude our efforts to comprehend them. Everything that is recorded of them is altogether wanting in concreteness and definiteness.

Jesus, on the other hand, is the most definite and most concrete of all personalities in the history of the past. We can at once grasp Him with our minds; He stands out upon the pages of history so vividly and forcibly that we almost see Him with our bodily eyes as He journeys about

[1] *The Conflict of Religions in the Early Roman Empire*, T. R. Glover, p. 115; cp. also *Three Essays in Religion*, J. S. Mill, pp. 253, 254.

the hills and plains of Palestine. We realize Him clearly as the wise Master, the tender Friend, the sympathetic Helper. And we understand, too, His human relationships—His mother, His kinsfolk and His friends. The Galilean and Jewish life of the time is also placed vividly before us, in these biographies, in its most real and truest form. We see the peasants at their occupations in the fields and villages, the throngs of people in the city streets, or Temple courts. The whole picture, in short, is drawn from, and is true to, the actual life of the time in its most real and concrete form. On the other hand, all this is wholly absent from the stories of the cult-gods.

We may, therefore, with all confidence and well-grounded assurance, conclude, after making a careful survey of the evidence which we have passed in review, that Jesus is in the truest and most actual sense, an historic personality of the period in which He is said to have lived. Amongst all the great historic personalities of the past, and towering far above the greatest of these, stands the solitary Figure of the Man from Galilee, who was eventually recognized by His most intimate friends and disciples not only as a 'Man approved of God,' but also as a manifestation of the Divine in human form. For, just as without a Buddha there could have been no Buddhism—without a Moses there could have been no

Judaism — and without a Mohammed modern Islam would never have been, so, too, without a personal Jesus, Christianity would never have arisen to guide and control the future destinies of mankind.

APPENDIX.

At one of the many public discussions which have taken place in Germany, held in Berlin on 31st January and 1st February 1910, when the Berlin division of the *Deutscher Monistenbund* debated this subject,[1] the chief speakers on either side being Professor Drews and Professor von Soden, the former stated his final position as classified under five headings:—

1. Before the times of the Jesus of the Gospels there existed, among certain secret Jewish sects, a cult-god named 'Jesus,' *probably* identical with an old Israelite sun-god named 'Joshua.' With this deity were fused Jewish apocalyptic ideas, and the pagan notion of a dying 'Saviour.'
2. Paul knew nothing of an 'historical' Jesus. The incarnated Son of God of his Epistles is merely this Jewish-heathen redeeming deity objectified and placed in history as an ideal centre of thought and worship.
3. The Gospels do not contain the history of an actual *man*, but only the *myth* of the God-Man Jesus, clothed in an historical dress.
4. The important, and for religious purposes significant, matters in the Gospels, *i.e.* the Baptism, the Lord's Supper, the Crucifixion and the Resurrection of Jesus, are all *borrowed* from the cult-symbolism of the mythical Jesus.

[1] Now published as *Berliner Religionsgespräch: Hat Jesus Gelebt?* (Berlin and Leipzig, 1910).

5. The 'historical' Jesus of modern critical theology has now become so vague and doubtful a figure in both theology and history that he can no longer be regarded as the absolutely indispensable condition of salvation.

Professor Drews stated that his work, *Die Christusmythe*, was written in the true interests of religion, for which *ideas* alone—not *personalities*—have value, and by reason of his conviction that the forms of Christianity, which have hitherto prevailed, are no longer sufficient for modern needs. Not the *historical Jesus*, he urges, but *Christ as an Idea*—as an idea of the divine humanity—must henceforth be the ground of religion. "When we can and will no longer believe on accidental personalities, we can and must believe on *Ideas*" (*Berliner Religionsgespräch*, p. 94 f.; cp. *Die Christusmythe*, p. xi).

He believes, in particular, that the 'Jesusism' of modern theology is wholly and fundamentally 'irreligious,' and now presents the greatest possible hindrance to all true religious progress.

To this it may be replied briefly that the Idea is sterile until embodied *in* a Personality.

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